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THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR

VOL. 17

JULY 1984

NO. 7

Paul Johnson: Did Haig Make Foreign Policy?

Robert Asahina: I.F. Stone Is Institutionalized

William Tucker, Terry Eastland:
Civil Rights Realities



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EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

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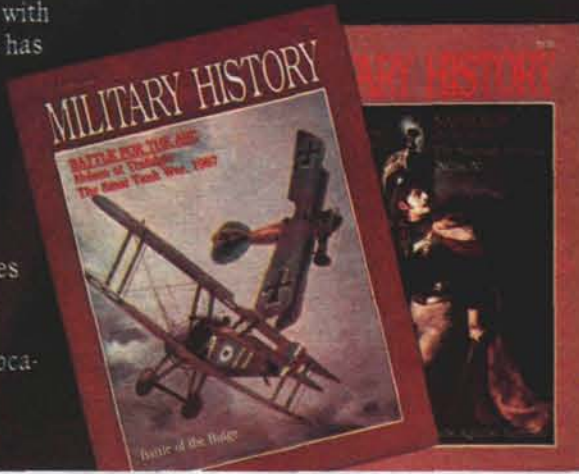
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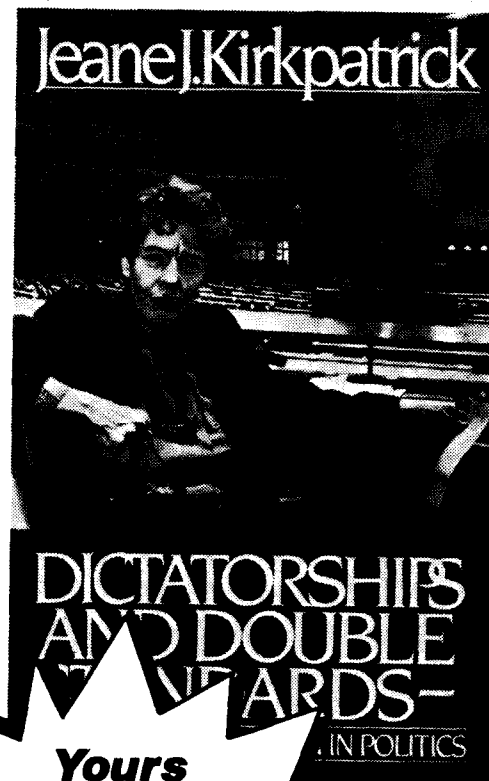
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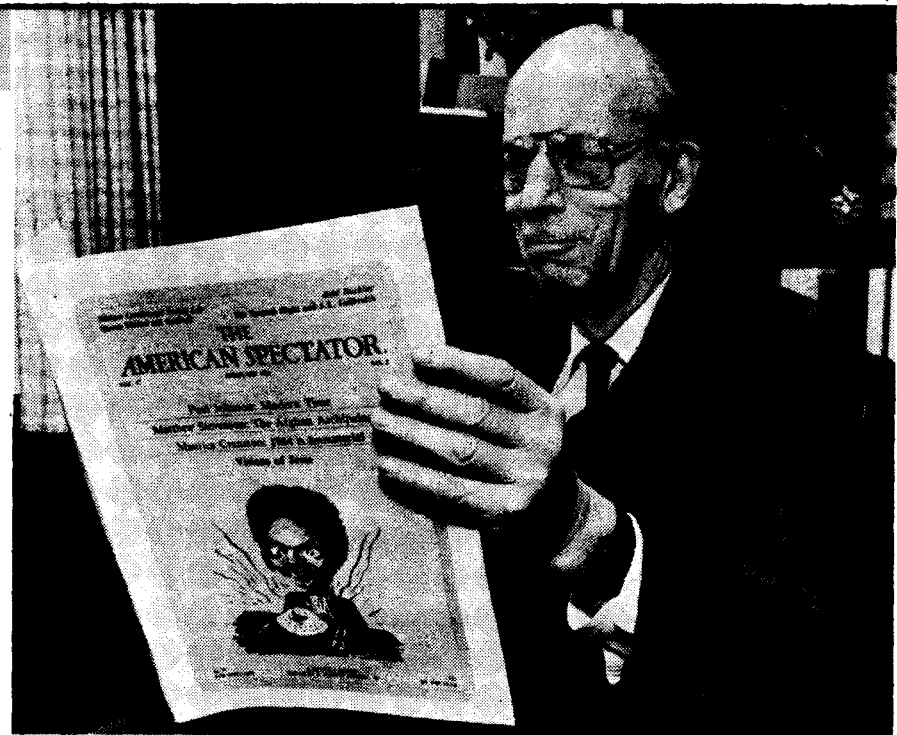
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Cover drawing by Elliott Banfield

THE CONTINUING CRISIS



•May passes. It has been one year since the Roman Catholic bishops of America hurled their pastoral letter across the Republic like brat kids floating a paper airplane into a classroom. They apparently remain very proud of it. Its double talk is high jesuitry. Its pious piffles make them swell with gluttonous satisfaction. Now the word is out that these frauds are planning yet another nonsensical pronunciamento, this time against capitalism, which is to say the economic system that has allowed them to fatten and to distribute largess to the world. America now produces some very fine Chardonnays; can anticlericalism with an elegant French bouquet be far off?

•Ebullient conservatives and neoconservatives all over the Republic observed the ninety-second birthday of Empress Zita of Austria. Empress Zita, who lives in Zizer, Switzerland, was "reported in very good form," still keeping up with international affairs through assiduous readings of the French, German, and English press, and always wearing those legendary black mourning gowns. The Empress, as trim and winsome as ever, is the widow of Charles I, the last Austro-Hungarian emperor. Ever since his 1922 death in Madeira, she has worn black, yet to no effect. Washingtonians enjoyed a delicious eye-roll over Mr. Robert McNamara's revelation that, yes, he and Mrs. Joan Braden, wife of syndicated columnist Mr. Tom Braden, are embarked on what modern sophisticates call "a relationship." But cautions the dashing and retired head of the World Bank, "she has eight kids and she loves her husband very much and she's not about to leave him for me or any other man and beyond that I wouldn't marry her because I'm not a homewrecker." Mrs. Braden, who often travels with the bespectacled 68-year-old Adonis, was even more frank. When asked by the *Washington Post* if their arrangement is romantic, she sighed, "Yes, I will not say that it is not." Miss Sonia Johnson, the presidential candidate of what UPI has termed the "moderate left" Citizens Party, is urging fellow moderate leftists to make a citizen's arrest of our debonair President for "war crimes." And congratulations to

Clark M. Clifford, chairman of the Truman Centennial Committee. During recent Washington ceremonies commemorating the centennial of President Harry Truman's birth, the ex-secretary of Defense told an unusually good story. During a tony banquet some years ago he saw a guest turn to the woman seated at his right and politely inquire: "Did I get your name correctly? Is your name Post?" "Yes," responded Post. "Is it Emily Post?" the man asked. "Yes," Emily Post responded. "Are you the world-renowned authority on manners?" he asked. "Why do you ask?" she replied. "Because," said he, "you have just eaten my salad."

•Amid tears and a profusion of solemnities about her commitment to good government and the commonweal, 1960s Wunderkind Miss Kathy Boudin was given 20 years to life for her role in the 1981 Brink's holdup that left a guard and two policemen dead. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics pulled out of the Olympic Games scheduled to begin this July in Satanic Los Angeles, and in Santa Ana, California, a judge has ruled that Disneyland violated the civil rights of two male teenagers when it ejected them from the Tomorrowland Terrace dance floor where they had insisted on dancing together. In Garden Grove, California, an obscene caller who repeatedly dialed Miss Pam French's telephone number found himself en route to the hoosegow after Miss

French, 29, got herself invited over to his villa. Miss French is a nine-year veteran of the local police force. Forward-looking penologists in Vancouver, British Columbia, announced their plan to allow the inmates of a local prison to watch kiddie porn and other explicit sexual materials of an off-beat nature so as to satiate their desires for the stuff and possibly to return them to lives of constructive heterosexual enthusiasm.

•The Department of Labor announced that unemployment for May dropped to 7.4 percent, and the Commerce Department reported that in the first quarter the economy roared onward at 8.8 percent. Iraq and Iran began blasting neutral shipping in the Persian Gulf. Authorities in Palm Beach County, Florida, announced that Mr. David Kennedy expired from the "multiple ingestion" of a trinity of drugs, and two men were arrested for allegedly supplying them to the young Kennedy. In campus news, Hunter College conferred an honorary doctorate of humane letters upon Miss Shirley MacLaine for her "... lifelong quest into philosophy and metaphysics." She believes in reincarnation, ghosts, goblins, and feminism. Two thousand students, faculty, and alumni showed up at the University of Chicago's Ida Noyes Hall for the university's biennial Lascivious Costume Ball where they rubbed skin and leather while stepping over puddles of vomit. Finally, those hoary ad-

monitions linking masturbation to warts on the hands can be derided no longer. The dean of a major Midwestern journalism school turned up in hospital with a hand that was actually fractured after vice officers in Tampa, Florida caught him in a beach-front comfort station masturbating into a urinal. According to Tampa police, as two officers accosted him at the urinal the dean "turned to face them while continuing his actions." Then things got out of hand.

•Mr. James Gordon, that Caravaggio of rock drummers whose melodious bashings accompanied such legendary artists as John Lennon, Joan Baez, and the Everly Brothers, has been convicted of the second-degree murder of his mother—no mama's boy he. A twelve-year-old boy in Akron, Ohio, acting, presumably, upon the property rights theories of John Rawls and all three Democratic presidential contenders, was arrested for robbing his seventh-grade classmates at gunpoint. On May 22, that Soviet General, Col. Gen. Semyon R. Romanov, who brought honor to himself and the entire Red Army when he oversaw the downing of Korean Air Lines' treacherous Flight 007, died suddenly in East Germany apparently without benefit of clergy. The limits of art have again been narrowed, this time in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Mr. John Clark Donahue, who served for twenty years as the artistic director of the Minneapolis Children's Theater Company, resigned three weeks after being charged with sexually abusing three young male students.

•The fabled efficiency of Addis Ababa's morticians almost cost an Ethiopian woman her life. The young woman apparently swooned while giving birth in a local hospital and was shoveled up and carried off in a funeral procession from which she might never have recovered had not the incomparable air of downtown Addis Ababa evoked from her several violent sneezes and a cough, thus notifying the assembled galoots that the corpse was actually a corpus and not yet fit for planting. Everyone had a good laugh. In San Jose, California, Professor Scott Rice awarded the third annual Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton award for the worst possible opening sentence in a



novel to Mr. Steve Garman, whose entry was: "The lovely woman-child Kaa was mercilessly chained to the cruel post of the warrior-chief Beast, with his barbarian tribe now stacking wood at her nubile feet, when the strong clear voice of the poetic and heroic

Handsomas roared, 'Flick your Bic, crisp that chick, and you'll feel my strong steel through your last meal.'" Grand and gaudy stuff that, but it is time for Professor Rice to come up with an award for political oratory. Last month the famously eloquent

Jesse Jackson, while prophesying the consequences of a Reagan re-election, averred this beauty: "When people begin to revolt he will try to use military means to suppress them, which will not work. That will be the basis for some real ugly polarization in

our country. People are not going to keep freezing in the wintertime in this country and remain malnourished without revolting." There you have it from the Daniel Webster of Campaign '84.

—RET

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

Debating the Death Penalty

I'm grateful to Jeremy Rabkin for a fair and penetrating review of *The Death Penalty: A Debate* (TAS, May 1984). However, he makes two comments which I've heard so often that I want to take the opportunity to reply.

1. He thinks that my view would have gained force if I had presented the feeling that the death penalty is deserved as more than just that—as, I suppose, a moral judgment objectively grounded. I agree that would have added force to the widely shared intuition. But the fault is not mine. Philosophers from Aristotle to Kant to Gewirth have not, in my opinion, succeeded in doing what Rabkin (and I) would like. I cannot pretend that they have, even if it would improve my case for the death penalty.

2. Rabkin also blames both my co-author and me for not relating the death penalty to military science, health regulations, abortion, etc. I never understood wherein the execution of convicted murderers could be thought inconsistent with preserving the intrauterine—therefore certainly innocent—life of babies. Anyway, nearly everything in this world is indeed connected or can be so perceived. But it is useful sometimes to isolate a topic for discussion without trying to explain the whole universe. In our case I think the gains exceeded the losses.

—Ernest van den Haag
New York, New York

Jeremy Rabkin replies:

I thank Ernest van den Haag for his compliment, but I do not think my objections any less valid for having been voiced by others in the past. I grant that the moral arguments for capital punishment are not so unanswerable as demonstrations in geometry. This hardly justifies van den Haag's exclusive reliance on statistical arguments about the death penalty's deterrent value, however, when—as he himself concedes—these arguments are also "inconclusive." On the other hand, moral arguments gain in credibility the more they are shown to be consistent with prior moral intuitions and lose credibility in proportion to the conflicts they generate with other moral

beliefs. One can explain this by reference to the "coherence theory" in modern philosophy, by the findings of psychologists regarding "cognitive dissonance," or indeed by the method and example of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. However explained, the claim that a moral argument draws strength from a supporting context of moral arguments should not be controversial. So I still wish Professor van den Haag had given us more moral argument and context for it.

Immigration Arabesque

I congratulate the editors of *The American Spectator* on Mr. Bradford's article, "Sentiment and U.S. Immigration Policy," in their April issue. Bradford's presentation is so involved in the cute little arabesques typical of "English-professor" productions, that by becoming ludicrous he defeats his own purpose. A splendid article—all that is left now is to reprint it, and let the masses of American people attempt to chew on, and regurgitate, that clot of self-satisfied dregs of a decaying mind.

While Bradford sits at a comfortable desk, fuming about "eighteenth-century weeping comedy," *Beowulf*, Vergil's Dido and Spartan hosts, Menelaus, etc., *ad nauseam*, there are some five millions of poor human beings who have very justly fled, as *refugees*, from oppressive socio-political conditions, as in Mexico, to come to our country, work very hard, raise their children, *pay our taxes*, and conduct themselves as kind-hearted, genial people. Their collective personality is an astonishing contrast to Bradford's Puritan-Texan model for another painting by Grant Wood, for Bradford makes of himself a symbol of the wooden elements in Texan Anglo-American society. He selects a phrase from the American Convention of 1787—"foreigners resident in the United States, deserving our citizenship but not yet one with us in spirit." Mr. Bradford, how many black people of your South do you include in that quote? What intolerance is to be found in America, it seems it can well be found in Texas! The spirit of the killing of Kennedy is alive and well.

Bradford compounds two opposites: "voices, South and North American, for whom . . . the desire for destruction of the U.S. is a daily dream," and then thrusts in, "the flood of undocumented Mexican workers," etc., and somehow supposes that we are going to agree with his dark hint that there is some sort of connection between the two. Mr. B., there is a real gap between those two elements you glibly juxtapose! McCarthyism Redivivus!

To the editors of *The American Spectator*, I suggest: Following the words in your masthead, "Published remarkably without regard to sex, lifestyle, race, color, . . . or national origin," you may now add, "and indeed really without much regard to good sense." This article shows it.

—F.W. Dickson Franck
Belvidere, Illinois

M.E. Bradford replies:

Mr. Franck's response to my essay on the question of illegal immigration is an example of the officially benevolent passions against which my remarks were intended as a warning. I, of course, deny that my discussion has anything to do with the entry of *refugees* as that term is used in our law. If all the people of the world who would like to enjoy our standard of living and our social services were to define their geographic distance from our borders as a form of oppression, then we might expect that half the population of the world that is not under Communist control would soon pack its knapsack and head in our direction. For Mr. Franck to insist on his own definition of "refugee" is to beg the question. I, of course, say nothing against the motives of most illegal immigrants who have broken our laws to come and live among us. Very few blacks resident in the United States are not citizens. The phrase quoted from the Fathers had nothing to do with free Negroes.

"The voices, South and North American" which I mention are not by me equated with the illegal Mexican immigrants. They belong instead to people who would make use of such immigration in effecting a political and

social transformation of the Southwestern United States.

One last complaint. Southerners do not like to be called Puritans with a capital "P." We have never embraced that spirit which would erect among our countrymen a New Jerusalem and have never claimed a special intimacy with the will of the Deity on political questions. That mistake is made more frequently in Illinois.

Fat Bishop Found

I think I have a clear winner for you in the "Find the Fattest Bishop" event ("The Continuing Crisis," TAS, April 1984). It is, appropriately, Patriarch Pimen of Moscow . . . Enclosed photos only begin to give an idea of the fellow's bulk since he is also very tall. Although perhaps most notable as a trencherman, his "outbursts on behalf of the world's poor and against the capitalist vice" may be found in virtually any copy of the English edition of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*.

Although I suppose Patriarch Pimen the clear winner, I do not know his weight or see any practical way to get him on a NLGA certified scale . . .

And does Mr. Burr really want to "accompany the winner" around Indianapolis? Would not Patriarch Pimen, for his part, be as pleased with a modest trophy? Perhaps a brass pirozhok . . .

—A Tokyo Spectator
Tokyo, Japan

Bad Title

The title and kicker supplied by the editors of *The American Spectator*—"Literary Lies of Respectable Liberals: The problems faced by Irving Howe & Co. can't all be blamed on the 'little despots' of neoconservatism" (TAS, June 1984)—misrepresented both the argument and the tone of my article. Nowhere did I hint at literary or any other kind of lying. Nor is there any justification for suggesting that the article treats respectability with irony. Furthermore, I discussed the views of a few prominent *individuals*, not "Irving Howe & Co."

It is distressing to have attempted a
(continued on page 44)

EDITORIALS



THE FORMIDABLE MISS TUTWILER

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Like millions of other Americans I do not know Margaret Tutwiler, but from last month's news reports I get the impression that she is a formidable woman. Certainly she had a mighty impact on Congressman Donald J. Albosta and his Democratic colleagues who have been working so hard to uncover the origins of those Carter briefing papers that happened into the hands of James A. Baker 3d while he prepared candidate Reagan for his 1980 debate. Such is the colossal probity and persuasiveness of Miss Tutwiler that a magisterial word or two intoned by her to Congressman Albosta's panel was all that was required to reveal William J. Casey as a procurer of those stolen goods and possibly even an occasion of sin for young James A. Baker 3d.

Casey, whose public career goes back many decades, was head of the Reagan campaign in 1980. Now full of years and honors he is the head of the

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post column syndicated by King Features.



highly secret but still apparently quite useful Central Intelligence Agency. Nonetheless last month House Speaker O'Neill suggested it might be time for President Reagan to replace him; Casey is often the target of charges from the Hon. O'Neill's Democrats, and the Hon. O'Neill fears that with this most recent charge grave "damage" has been done to Casey's "credibility." True, last year when Congressman Albosta announced his plan to investigate how Carter debate materials reached Republican headquarters, the Hon. O'Neill doubted that Albosta's Post Office and Civil Service subcommittee had jurisdiction. Yet now that Miss Tutwiler has spoken the Speaker of the House is all for still more investigations, and apparently he favors Casey's retirement.

Miss Tutwiler was identified in Congressman Albosta's two-volume report as the "credible witness" who "corroborated" White House Chief of Staff Baker's assertion that he received the Carter papers from Casey. Casey has steadfastly denied Baker's assertion. When it was first made Casey strode into the offices of the *New York Times* and rather breathtakingly declared that for him to have trafficked in those unsavory documents would have been "totally uncharacteristic and quite incredible." Apropos of such sneaky business he noted that "After being involved in seven presidential campaigns, I know that's dynamite." The Carter briefing books "could have destroyed the campaign." Casey also signed an affidavit to this effect.

Nonetheless Miss Tutwiler has spoken, and though she is described in the Albosta Report as a "loyal Baker aide" her words in support of Baker's story and in opposition to Casey's have put Casey in the soup with men such as O'Neill and Albosta, who incidentally is a member of the Sugar Beet Growers Association and a man who knows how to look beneath the surface of things. His report concludes that the "better evidence" is that Casey lied and that the Attorney General must

needs appoint an independent prosecutor to get on with the political high jinks of harassing Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign director.

Casey believes that all this is pish-posh and malevolent. Casey's friends in the Administration are very irate, and not only with their Democratic antagonists. Congressman Albosta's Report proves no misconduct on the part of Casey. All it contains is Baker's allegation, and all that Miss Tutwiler and a few others have done is pass on what Baker told them. The Report does not establish who in the Carter campaign stole the briefing papers. It does not even establish precisely what these materials were. All that it does establish is that Baker had this stolen property, copied it, and made use of it.

THE HART BULL

Last April, Gary Hart, the candidate of Yuppie America, found himself at one of the most he-man universities in America, Texas A & M. There he let off a fierce blast against poor Walter Mondale, accusing him of complicity in the "weak," "inept," and "uncertain" administration of Jimmy Carter. Then, with Old Glory snapping in the breeze, he sounded like a Commander in Chief from pre-Yuppie America: "As President I will not hesitate to use force when vital American interests are threatened."

Doubtless for those Yuppies who supported him early in Campaign '84 it was a grim moment. Yet allow me to reassure them. He did not mean it. Yuppies of our great Northeast, tonight you can return with a smile to your unisex gyms, your healthfood shops, your drug therapy centers. Your champion was mere, discharging more humbug for the credulous. The very next sentence of his Texas A & M Manifesto was meant just for you: "But I will not hazard American lives where our purpose is unclear, our goals are unattainable, or negotiation has been left untried." Here then was more of that odd empty gasconade brought into our political oratory in the mid-

In Washington today James A. Baker 3d is a man clothed in magic. He glides through controversies and scandals like a spectral figure, though one that smiles suavely. In last month's burlesque the entire focus of media attention was on the mysterious acquisition of the papers. Baker says he got them from Casey. Casey says he did not and that not one of his six deputies in the campaign had ever heard of them. Baker admits he had them and used them, yet somehow in the media Casey appears as the villain.

This fellow Baker's numinous powers surpass even Miss Tutwiler's. Journalists should approach him circumspectly and with a talisman near their hearts. □

dle 1970s by such masters of the art as Jimmy Carter and Jerry Brown. In olden times we called it double talk.

In April's New York primary, the Hon. Hart was securely to the left of Walter Mondale on foreign policy. He



was insistent that we end military assistance to El Salvador "immediately." He was vague about where beyond our borders we might ever use force. He was poetic about how all disagreements between nations can be resolved by negotiations or a check from the U.S. Treasury. This is the real Gary Hart. Believe me, my Yuppie friends, and let no geopolitical hassling divert you from your scramble toward upward mobility and a BMW.

I have in hand a remarkable document, a page of nearly incomprehensible flummeries from the February 28, 1982 *Washington Post*. There in imperishable print your hero is ensnared sounding like a ten-year-old who either does not know the answers to the questions asked or is afraid to say. My

guess is that he does not know the answers. Learned colleagues, such as the political scientist Dr. Karl O'Lessker, tell me that he knows the answers but believes it indiscreet to utter them within earshot of his natural, and quite isolationist, constituency. Whatever the truth might be, the Hon. Hart in this interview sounds like a bright little boy full of good intentions and wonder.

When asked "to what extent does the United States go to resist the formation of a Marxist government" particularly in the Western Hemisphere, his good intentions swell. The United States, he solemnizes, must "deal country by country. . . . I don't think we ought to automatically assume that a self-determined Marxist government is something we can't stand."

Having read my Marx and enjoyed

my Yankee freedoms, I am certain that a Marxist government is quite intolerable to me; but back to the Hon. Hart. Soon the candidate of new ideas is discussing big ideas. He says that "our interest lies in seeing (that) the entire region is not totalitarian or totally anti-American." Thus a modicum of anti-Americanism is permissible, but we must draw the line at "totalitarian."

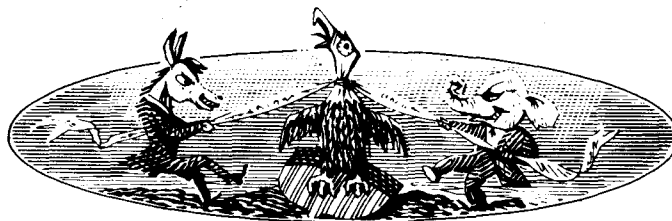
Next he is asked if Nicaragua is totalitarian. "No, not so far as I know." And Cuba? "It's not a government I'd want to live under; it's certainly not democratic." Asked for an example of a totalitarian regime somewhere the Hon. Hart is bold: "Sure. Extremes of the right and the left all over Latin America." "Like?" asks a *Post* writer. "Paraguay," comes the brave reply. "That would be the

right. What about the left?" queries the interviewer. "Well, Cuba is not totalitarian and it's not democratic." The *Post*'s interviewer probes deeper: "If Cuba is not a totalitarian government, what is?" Quoth the orator of the Texas A & M Manifesto: "I don't know."

From here the interview goes rapidly in the direction of baby talk. When asked if Cuba is more or less democratic than the USSR or if perhaps it is inaccurate even to describe the land of the KGB as totalitarian, the candidate of ideas ducks the question, says "totalitarian is probably a word that I should not have used," and maunders on about the futility of using military force to protect American interests "even in our hemisphere."

There is the real Gary Hart. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



CITIZEN HAGS

by Tom Bethell

Last month I went down the road to hear a campaign speech—my first and I trust last this season. The speaker was Sonia Johnson, presidential candidate of the Citizens Party. (In 1980, their candidate was Barry Commoner, who was on the ballot in 30 states and received 236,148 votes.) The location was the University of the District of Columbia. I had not realized that such a place existed, although it is little more than a mile from where I live. It attested, in my opinion, to a local superfluity of tax dollars: a cluster of cumbersome concrete structures, mostly with vertically inscribed signs containing the word "resources" somewhere in the title.

Somewhere underground I found a luxurious auditorium. In the hallway outside tables were set up and women were selling feminist literature—for example, Marianne Wax's *Let's Take Back Our Space: "Female" and "Male" Body Language As a Result of Patriarchal Structures (with 2037 photographs)*. I decided against buying it.

All told there may have been 300 of

us gathered in the auditorium at the appointed hour—perhaps ten men, and almost no blacks of either sex. Was my "space" a tiny bit threatened? I couldn't help wondering if some of the wimmin who came striding down the aisles in bib-overalls were enrolled in the karate course advertised outside.

There was a warm-up speaker called Mary Daly, who would be reading from her new book, *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy*. In fact, the poster advertising the event had Daly's name in lettering larger than Johnson's. On the cover of her earlier book *Gyn/Ecology* Ms. Daly is called an "associate professor of theology at Boston College," and a "Revolutionary Hag." I gather that she was once a Catholic and perhaps still does consider herself to be one.

Sonia Johnson you may know about. She is in any event one of my favorite people. According to *Ms.* magazine, she became "instantly internationally famous" in 1979 when she was excommunicated from the Mormon Church for supporting the Equal Rights Amendment. In 1981 Doubleday published her book, *From Housewife to Heretic*, thus confirming

my suspicion that "heretic" has in our time become a term of approval. As *Ms.* put it: "No one could have seemed less likely than Sonia Johnson to become a famous activist, much less a heretic."

I try to keep up with Sonia's antics because they are so odd and so interesting. In 1982 she publicly fasted for 37 days in the corridors of the Illinois legislature, protesting the legislators' manful refusal to ratify ERA; and later that summer I spotted her on Constitution Avenue, when she and a group of like-minded heretics were squirting blood and red paint on the pillars of the National Archives Building. (It contains the U.S. Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and various other male-chauvinist documents.)

Sonia that day was wearing a red T-shirt and sipping a soda as she admired her Jackson Pollock-like handiwork. I approached cautiously and asked her: "Did you say you would like to strangle God?" (as she had written in her book).

"I said I'd like to kill him," she replied. Then she set off resolutely down the street with her little cluster of supportive wimmin, to continue her

protest at the Department of Injustice—J. Edgar's old hangout. At that point a team of charladies, armed with bristly brushes and Ajax, emerged from the Archives Building to clean up the mess.

A few months later Sonia ran for charlady, I mean chairlady, of NOW, but narrowly lost, to my disappointment.

Now she came to the podium—a slight figure wearing a cerise jacket over a mauve top, black trousers, and a button on her lapel reading, "Listen to a Woman for a Change." She told us how "moved" she had been when Mary Daly, whom she evidently regarded as her superior, "recognized and approved of what I was doing." Daly's poetry not only exposed the "motives and machinations of the masters," but helped us "remember our deep ontological wildness." And so Sonia was honored to present her to us.

The Daly Woman had short grizzly hair and wore a horizontal striped rugger-bugger jersey. If you saw her coming down the sidewalk at you, you might well decide to step aside. She

might make a good line-blocker, or whatever they call it in football. Right off she struck the live mike with her hand—Bonk!—and said: “These little phallic things! Sometimes they work and sometimes they don’t!” Then she gazed out at her admiring audience and asked: “Are there any Revolting Hags or Spinsters here?” In response there was a sizable show of hands.

“... All of our foresisters, past and

future, so we are gathered in 1984, a period of extreme danger for wimmin, extinction by nuclear holocaust or chemical contamination which wimmin are living through to sustain a biophilic consciousness... Dragon-identified. Pure lust does journey through three realms, the realm of archospheres, pyrospheres, recovering the volcanic virtues of *wild* wimmin. It’s 1984, the time of Reagan & Co.

So, looking at the sado-society, penocracy, the product of the phallic flight from lust, transforming it into the more sublimed phallic lechery—that’s what we call civilization?”

“Hooo hooo hooo hooo hooo!”

Oh, the Monstrous Regiment that was the audience loved every minute of it, every pun and every quip. The Daly woman proceeded to ridicule St. Jerome and St. Simeon Stylites, the

former having been visited by a “bevy of dancing girls in his imagination,” the latter attended by a flock of faithful who “gathered the precious turds that dropped from his body.” She ridiculed the Pope, and she ridiculed St. Paul, from one of whose Epistles she read in a tone of sing-song sarcasm, ending with the triumphant put-down: “Well, speak for yourself!”

“Rage is like volcanic dragon-fire,” the liberated theologian continued. “This rage is what moves us into the race of wimmin... The whole world is groaning under phallic rule.” What is needed, she added, is “the courage to sin,” which is simply the “courage to be,” according to her etymology.

She mimicked her critics, speaking in a hilarious, mincing tone of ridicule, impersonating the shocked, middle class housewife who might have strayed by accident into a Daly discourse. “‘Oh, she’s so bitter,’ they say. ‘So bitter.’ These are the people who talk about ‘fulfillment.’” She repeated the word prissily to stress its asininity: “Fulfillment. Do you want to be a fulfilled woman?”

“Heh Heh Heh Heh Heh,” came the appreciative response from the Revolting Hags.

She talked a bit about witches, unintelligibly to me (although I do now understand why they burned them), made another blasphemous joke about “God the flasher, God the stud, God the holy hoax,” and then began to introduce the thrilled Sonia. The Daly Woman told us not to worry about voting for Sonia on the grounds that this would “take a vote away from Mondale—as though we should be grateful for slightly less evil! They’ll punish you for being a little itty-bitty feminist, so why not go the whole way?”

Sonia Johnson began by telling us that she could no longer remember how to spell her last name, and everyone understood perfectly what she was talking about. The Women’s Movement, she proclaimed, was the greatest movement in the history of the world, and it had come “in the nick of time.” She had been caught red-handed in her own sexism and why was she laughing? I mean look at who *is* President, someone on the plane had suggested that she run for President, she was going to see Barbara in Florida. So she began to experience this incredible... the minute she started to think about it she *knew what to do*, as President, that is. She realized how they had mystified the office, and she knew what she’d do her first day in the Oval Office. Think about it audience, do you know what she would do?

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By William Leggett

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Sonia lifted up her arms like a conductor, and summoned forth some sympathetic responses, as though she were a conductor facing a familiar orchestra. "Disarm all the missiles!" someone shouted out.

"Write a new dictionary!"

"Clean up the environment!"

"Institute 24-hour day-care!"

"Pass the ERA!"

"End all dealings with racist South Africa!"

Tap Tap Tap went the baton. Sonia was well pleased with her players. "I didn't hear anybody say anything that is not in my platform," she responded. "Feminism is the most all-encompassing analysis of the human situation that we know of," she thought. "If we had a feminist in the White House, the chaos would disappear."

Margaret Thatcher and Jeane Kirkpatrick were mere "female impersonators."

We should: demilitarize the planet, cut the military budget, unilaterally disarm; cooperate instead of compete; stop brutalizing the planet, raping and poisoning our embryonic fluid; use winds and sun and biomass—"work with Earth's rhythms."

Sonia said that with a little more effort she would be getting federal matching funds. "I love the fact that the federal government is going to pay me to say it," she said. And what's more she might be included in the League of Women Voters debates. Don't-you-love-that?

Did someone ask a question about racism? Sonia addressed herself to the problem. "One of the first things to undermine the racist mind, the President can make 3000 appointments, . . . the Secretary of Defense and the Federal Reserve Board, places with enormous status, and where money is taken care of. And you can begin to undercut homophobia by appointing gays and lesbians—you immediately attack the problem at the root. Not just token places, powerful places like the Supreme Court!"

Barbara Demming had said: We should run a coven for President. Convene covens all over the country. "It would be a lot more democratic. A lot less hierarchical. Not just revolution," Sonia explained. "Transformation."

Someone asked a question about Congress.

"Congress, what are we going to do about Congress?" Sonia agreed. "Just when we need them, they go flaccid on us . . ."

Oh no. The audience looked a bit crestfallen when that sank in.

"Oh, that was an awful joke," Sonia agreed. She tried to change the metaphor.

"They . . . they don't rise to the occasion."

Oh groan. Try again.

"They just . . . keep doing it!"

Well, how very Freudian, my dear. Fatally trapped, you see, by her patriarchal, sado-social, penocratic, life-hating upbringing.

"This is getting really funny," Sonia worried. She concluded by saying: "We're just going to have to restructure stuff a lot. Have to remember that this country was founded by a patriarchy."

On the way out they were selling a "Wanted For War Crimes" poster of Reagan, a poster prepared by the Citizens Party. The four crimes listed were: Invasion of Grenada. Overthrowing the Nicaraguan Government. Killing of Civilians in El Salvador. Deploying First Strike Nuclear Weapons.

There was an unformulated question nagging at me as I made good my escape, threading my way between the Revolting Hags and the concrete resource centers. Oh yes, that was it. Why was it, again, that they had found the Democratic party to be so inhospitable to their views? Sonia Johnson had explained why, but somehow it had slipped my mind. □

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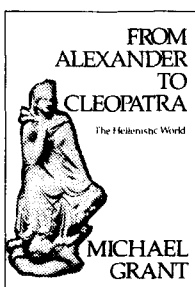
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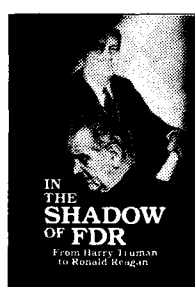
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Gregory A. Fossedal

THE PRICE OF GOLD

It's not unlikely that we'll soon return to the gold standard.
But there's still one matter that will require resolution.

"If we do it, Lew, how do we figure out the right price?" That's what Ronald Reagan is said to have whispered across the table recently to political ally and monetary scholar Lewis Lehrman, capping an hour-long session on the gold standard. Assuming the reports are accurate, the President's return-price query may presage serious consideration of a gold plank to be offered next month at the GOP convention in Dallas. The question has significance on several levels.

To begin with, it suggests the President has leaped beyond conventional thinking and is seriously considering how to maintain and institutionalize the Reagan Prosperity in a second term. (On the dark side, he might ask, "Will I have a second term—or more to the point, will my young turk supporters in Congress have one—if the interest rate squeeze continues into the summer?") The question also parallels a growing openness to gold-based reform among other Western leaders. Arthur Burns, Henry Kissinger, François Mitterrand, Helmut Schmidt, Richard Nixon—all endorse a Bretton Woods II. Once laughable, the gold standard is now respectable, even fashionable, among the policy elite.

The reason for this turnabout is growing recognition that there may be no alternative to gold. Interest rate targeting gave us OPEC and inflation. Then came monetarist stagnation. The most recent policy experiment—of having no policy at all—has run its course. Inflation is down, but only to 5 percent, a level once thought intolerable. Interest rates are down too, to 12 percent or more for a home mortgage. That we have had 17 months of growth testifies to Mr. Volcker's skill.

Gregory A. Fossedal is an editorial writer for the Wall Street Journal and co-author (with Daniel O. Graham) of A Defense that Defends, published earlier this year by Devin-Adair, Greenwich, Connecticut.

But it now seems clear that the Volcker savvy cannot get banks to lend out 30-year mortgages at 3 percent or less, the historic norm under gold regimes.

One way *not* to get off this treadmill is for the White House to launch a frontal assault on Mr. Volcker to "loosen" up on the money supply in an election year. Such jawboning of the Fed not only fails to clarify for the public the real issue of monetary policy, which is how to replace the money supply targets with something better; it also, clearly, doesn't work. When the White House attacked the Fed in early May for a Fed-induced rise in interest rates, it was forced to back off almost immediately. After all, the Fed was well within two target ranges for money and was above them, i.e., too loose already, by a third measure. Hours after Larry Speakes and Treasury Secretary Donald Regan suggested the Fed was clamping down too

hard, a legion of tight-money supporters rode to the Fed's rescue. The *Washington Post* joined in by launching a pair of vicious attacks on Mr. Regan, the one Administration member who still talks about monetary reform and further tax cutting. By Monday, May 14, the White House was begging for mercy. President Reagan even issued a statement defending Volcker and blaming any rise in interest rates "on the belief that we may not really have licked inflation yet." At a press conference days later, he issued a dreadful statement that many supply-siders feared would kill chances for their gold plank. But that retreat can only prolong the White House's monetary anguish—and come August, there will only be one other game in town.

This doesn't mean that the Fed hasn't been too tight since the spring of 1983, or that rising interest rates in 1984 are not attributable to Mr. Volcker's tightening. It has and they

are. It does mean that the only way we know the Fed has been too tight is not by the money supply figures, which are irrelevant, but by the price of gold. Thus the problem with interest rates is not that Mr. Volcker has been somewhat tight within the present framework of policy, though tight he has been. The problem is the present policy framework itself, which cannot provide the insurance of a stable dollar that markets require to lend out money at low interest rates.

Mr. Volcker himself offered an important insight in this regard in a speech delivered last December in San Francisco. Commenting on the Fed's gains against inflation, the chairman suggested that an effective monetary policy must combat not only a falling dollar, i.e., inflation, but also a *rising* dollar, i.e., deflation. Either one can cause interest rates to rise. When banks expect inflation, they will charge a higher interest rate to cover the fact that the dollars they will someday be repaid are likely to be worth less. This is readily understood. But what if the dollars are suddenly worth more? What if it suddenly takes, say, twice as many barrels of oil, or tons of coffee, or bushels of wheat, to pay back a dollar-denominated loan? What will happen is that debtors required to make such unexpectedly large payments will begin to go broke.

This is exactly what happened from 1980 to 1982, and is being signaled again by a falling gold price in 1984. The squeeze in prices will cause some debtors—Brazil, Argentina, Poland—to default, even as previous Fed tightenings led to Volcker Coups in Nigeria and at Continental Bank. Deflation costs the banks money in a direct sense, depriving them of loan payments, and also causes the market value of loans to other rickety borrowers to decline. The banks must either eat the losses, or hide them by denying troubled loans are troubled—and, ultimately, they must charge



somebody a higher rate of interest, even if it is only U.S. borrowers who don't benefit from the largess of Chase Manhattan abroad.

Hence, to blame interest rates on expected inflation, as President Reagan and his advisers repeatedly do, is to capture half the problem, but only half. The real problem, as one supply-side economist puts it, is simply "flation"—the knowledge in financial markets that the Federal Reserve may be driving the dollar up or down, with bad consequences either way.

Mr. Reagan's question about finding the right return price suggests a serious interest in exploring the alternative to the monetary morass caused by the Federal Reserve's flationists. More than that, though, the question is the right question. This is not to say there are not other nuts-and-bolts worries caused by the gold standard, such as: How will markets know that future administrations won't violate it? (Answer: They won't, just as no one knows for sure that every team in the National Football League will show up in the right stadium. But a schedule certainly increases the odds.) Or: What's to stop the Soviets from dumping all their gold on the world market? (Answer: Nothing. If they sold everything they own the price would change by less than 1 percent.) But such cavils have already been answered ably.¹ Mr. Reagan, by contrast, raises the one question that has not been

¹The two papers for the uninitiated are Jude Wanniski's "Gold Standard Q-and-A," available from Polyconomics in Morristown, New Jersey, and Lew Lehrman's longer, historical study of gold for Morgan Stanley in New York.



answered, at least not systematically. Indeed, past gold reforms suggest that setting the right price is the one potential sticking point. You can keep the other can't-go-back arguments in their proper perspective by remembering what a gold standard is, in its essence.

The gold standard is simply a rule that tells the Fed when to lower interest rates and when to raise them. When gold rises, signaling an inflation,

Once laughable, the gold standard is now respectable, even fashionable, among the policy elite.

you raise interest rates. When it falls, you lower them. One could arrange this policy with a phone call. Indeed, there have been more than a dozen returns to gold in recent history. Economist Alan Reynolds recently studied five: the U.S. in 1792 and 1879, England in 1921 and 1925, France in 1926. The mechanics varied widely: different return prices, degrees of convertibility, and exchange rate arrangements. But nations have returned, each time producing a dramatic fall in interest rates, steady prices, and growth.

Even so, finding the right price is important. The case for gold is that the price of gold tells us something about the economy. Advocates argue that steady gold means steady money, with the attendant benefits of price stability and low interest rates. Changes in the price of gold, conversely, have bad effects: too high, inflation; too low, deflation. It follows that the return price matters. If \$300 gold caused a 1982 recession, it could do the same in 1985. If \$700 gold had inflation reeling in 1979, it might again. Supply-side money will be given all of 15 minutes to work, so the price had better be right.

One return price model, suggested by Arthur Laffer, would essentially compare the movement of gold to that of other commodity prices and adjust gold accordingly. The method has intuitive appeal: If other prices have moved up, say, by three times since 1971, why not put gold at three times its 1971 price of \$35 and be done with it? Given the movement of commodity prices since the collapse of Bretton Woods, gold would come down to \$250 under the Laffer model. A second glance, however, suggests serious flaws. Remember what we are talking about when we discuss taking the price of gold back down to \$250. If gold really is the best proxy for goods and services, we are talking about changing the whole price level in order to suit

past changes in the price level. We are fitting the leading indicator to lagging indicators. What we want is to do just the opposite—stop changing the value of the dollar now, and let other prices drift down or up to equilibrium.

In 1925, Winston Churchill, observing the downward drift of various commodity prices, decided to return Britain essentially to the pre-War price of gold at \$4.86 an ounce. Of course, those falling commodity prices—

wholesale prices falling 48 percent from 1920 to 1923—were a sign that the British pound had already been severely deflated following the country's violation of the gold standard. At such times, scholar Roy Jastram notes, the price of gold relative to other commodities often rises: Gold becomes a hedge against further capricious changes in the value of money. Falling prices drove up the value of unemployment compensation to 58 percent of a typical worker's pay by 1927, compared to 17 percent in 1920. And they drove Winston Churchill into the political wilderness for a decade.

A year after Churchill, by contrast, France simply pegged at the market price of \$25 an ounce. A wholesale price inflation rate of 50 percent fell to zero in six months; prices were essentially unchanged through 1930. Commercial bill rates fell to 2 percent and France grew faster than both the U.S. and Britain, sticking with gold (and largely avoiding the Depression) until 1936.

A better method than Laffer's has been suggested by Jude Wanniski and Robert Mundell. They would take the price of gold where it is now and freeze it. The standard could be solidified later in Congress and at Bretton Woods II. Wanniski: "What if you chose the wrong price? It would have to be well off the mark, up or down, to offset the great gains the system as a whole would enjoy." Given the state of the economy—solid growth began as gold stabilized between \$425 and \$450—"anywhere between \$350 and \$500 looks safe," he argues.

Yet the question remains: How do we know that the present price of gold, depressed to below \$380 from \$500 early in 1983 and \$650 in 1980, really is "safe"? Yes, there is a recovery going on today. But interest rates are rising and have many supply-side forecasters, including David Ranson, predicting growth of below 4 percent in 1985, with a possible recession late

in the year. Those numbers could mean an unemployment rate stuck above 7 percent indefinitely.

Precisely because gold runs ahead of other signals in the economy, what the present price of gold "means," in an age of changing gold prices, is uncertain. To take an extreme example, suppose the Fed engineered a vicious drop in the price of gold over the coming weeks to, say, \$200. Few supply-siders would then advocate freezing the price merely because to do so would prevent further declines. "If a good many commodity prices are below longer-run costs," Mr. Volcker wrote in 1983, "enforcing stability in those commodity prices would require declines in labor or other input costs." As Mr. Wanniski argues, "You have to think in three dimensions." The present price of gold can be leading us into a deflation even if the economy is growing, and even if prices which lag behind gold—the kind measured by price indexes—are rising too.

For this reason, Mr. Lehrman propounds a third model for finding the right price. He would not simply freeze gold at its present price. Instead, he would establish a period of, say, one year between the date a return to gold is announced and the date the price is set. The Fed would cease open market operations and maintain the discount rate within half a point of rates on commercial paper. This would allow free markets to set interest rates based on the demand for credit—and also based on the knowledge of an impending return to gold.

Such a market adjustment period would smooth many uncertainties, and indeed was a feature of several past



returns. Even so, it isn't foolproof, and thus during that adjustment period Lehrman would have the Treasury Secretary keep close track of the activity of marginal North American gold mines, those mines that are the last to be brought into production as the price of gold nears a full-employment level. The optimal price of gold would be the "clearing price" of mining an ounce out of one of those mines at full production.

For Lehrman, in other words, the problem of a changing price level is resolved by freezing the price of gold in the future. Where to freeze,

though, can only be viewed as a full-employment problem. The full-employment price of gold, logically, is the price at which idle resources of production are brought back into use. Lehrman uses the gold mine as a proxy for full employment in the economy just as one uses the price of gold as a proxy for the general price level.

My guess is that Wanniski and Lehrman are both right. Wanniski is right that even a freeze would produce substantial benefits, and that within the \$350-500 range, the price debate probably does not much matter.

Lehrman is right that there is a better way to go, and that arguments for gold-at-any-price may not convince a hesitant Donald Regan and Ronald Reagan to take the plunge. One piece of evidence in Lehrman's favor is the markets themselves. Interest rates and stocks both posted their healthiest movement as the price of gold surged to \$450 and \$500 from the fall of 1982 to March of 1983. Both grew less encouraging when gold fell below \$400 last summer, and the prolonged \$375 price has driven stocks down and interest rates up.

If Mr. Reagan still has doubts as

November nears, there are plenty of ways to test the water. He might simply talk about a monetary reform, as Mr. Regan did in late 1982. A firmer test would be to urge the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates until gold hits \$500. Either move would invigorate the economy, help the President's reelection chances, and set the stage for a firmer move to gold during or after the campaign. Getting back to gold will involve political courage, and some attention to the return-price details. But it's no more impossible than picking up a telephone and saying, "let's do it." □

William Tucker

BLACK FAMILY AGONISTES

How can it be said that black families are "breaking up" when they are no longer even forming?

For me, the prototypical moment of the Urban League/NAACP's "Joint Summit Conference on the Crisis in the Black Family" came as I was riding down one of the plate-glass, open-view elevators that spider up and down the walls of the stunning, 23-story atrium inside the Nashville Hyatt Regency.

I was riding with a fiftyish black college professor—prosperous, articulate, intelligent. As we hit the second-floor mezzanine, the doors opened and there stood another middle-aged black professional.

"Hey, Charlie, how you been? I didn't see you last night," said my fellow rider.

"Yeah, I was looking for you, too."

Then, as the other man started to get in the elevator, my companion said: "Well, you're not getting on, are you?"

"I'm going up to my room."

"Well, this is going down. You don't want to go down, do you?"

"Hell, no," the other said, stepping off just as the doors closed, and then, dropping into the vernacular, he intoned, "I've been down all my life!"

Everyone laughed, and as the elevator moved again, my companion shouted back through the doors:

"Well then, it must look like up to you!"

The 200-or-so black professionals who spent three days discussing the black family last May on the Fisk University campus spent a lot of time playing at being oppressed.

But they played very hard.

Pained faces, set in masks of despair, listened as speaker after speaker recited the indictment that charged white America, once again, with consigning black America to a permanent, internal exile. "We know the entire black community is under siege from a hostile society," affirmed one speaker. Heads, wearied with grief, nodded as a few responded, "Amen."

I'm sorry. I was probably in the wrong mood when I attended the conference. I had just read Thomas Sowell's brilliant book, *Ethnic America*, which, like everything I have read by Sowell, left me with a sense that I would never quite see the world in the same way again. I'm not going to do another one of those hatchet jobs on the black middle class. I think those people are terribly brave, terribly bold, and maneuvering brilliantly for a group that is caught in a cruel cross-current of social forces.

But I simply can no longer believe that white America is the main cause of black people's problems. I think the internal exile to which most black people seem to feel they are relegated is imaginary at best, self-imposed at worst.

In fact, if there was anything that came out of the Black Family Summit, it was that black people obviously feel an enormous ambivalence about the possibility that they actually are being assimilated into the mainstream of American culture. On the one hand, they remain hypersensitive to every one of life's little frustrations, quickly identifying every adverse event as some new form of "discrimination." Yet at the same time, almost every speaker expressed the anxiety that black people might be losing their identity by



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becoming *too* assimilated by American culture.

"We are all part of one big black family," declared John Jacob, president of the Urban League. "We must maintain our allegiance to that family." Dr. Asa Hilliard, professor of urban education at Georgia State University, outlined his interpretation of the movie *E.T.* as an "Afrocentric

family's new social pattern was *defended* as "one of our own institutions" that is being "called deviant because it departs from the norms that white society tries to impose on us."

To me, this simply says two things: 1) black people still refuse to recognize that it is the incredibly misguided "charity" of the welfare system that is breaking up their families; and 2)

Every year more black girls drop out of high school to have a baby than graduate from college.

Transformance." "I identify E.T. with black people," he explained solemnly. "E.T. integrated the white neighborhood, but he always kept his mind on going home. He never forgot who he was."

One of the things black people clearly fear most is that they may turn out not to be unique after all, but just plain old ordinary Americans. Then they will have lost their "black identity." Until they can resolve these problems themselves, I doubt if there is much that white people can do for them.

The facts about the black family, on the other hand, are brutal. More than half the black children born in this country today are illegitimate. Almost half of these—23 percent of all black children—are born to unwed *teenage* mothers. Every year, one speaker noted, more black girls drop out of high school to have a baby than graduate from college. Over 50 percent of all black children are now being raised in "single-parent households"—meaning by unmarried black women. About 75 percent of all poor black children are in these "families."

This is a social tragedy of truly frightening proportions. It has never happened before in history. Mao Tse-tung's *deliberate* efforts to break up the nuclear family on the Chinese rural communes didn't have even a fraction of the effect that contemporary American social policies have had on black Americans.

Yet what do blacks themselves offer as an explanation for this social devastation? The answer offered at the Nashville "Summit Conference" was curiously ambiguous. Half the time it was the usual litany of joblessness, discrimination, poor education, poor housing, and the "failure of the government to give us our share"—all of which is readily interpreted as a sinister plot by white America to destroy black America.

But the rest of the time, the black

these new social misalignments, however crippling, are already starting to produce their own vested interests that are going to be very, very hard to dislodge if anybody ever decides to do something about it.

In particular, a whole phalanx of black women have now picked up the argument that "the nuclear family is an outmoded institution," and that families consisting of only a mother and her assorted children is the wave of the future—or, alternately, a return to some mythical African past.

Thus, unless something is done awfully quickly, it appears that the new black social alignment—welfare mothers and their children in the home; homeless, aimless men inhabiting that netherworld known as "the street"—is going to become a permanent American institution. What this means for the future of our cities, and for American society in general, is something that I don't like to spend very much time thinking about.

As William Graham Sumner said, "It is dangerous to tinker with societies in the same way we carry out experiments in the medical field. When you experiment on an individual, the worst that can happen is that the person will die. But a society is an eternal organism. When you experiment on it, whatever the results, it is going to go on living."

The causes of the disintegration of the black family are about as difficult to find as the sports page in today's newspaper.

A great number of black people live near the margins of subsistence. As Thomas Sowell points out, this is not anything unusual in American history. Every ethnic group in America has started near the margins of poverty. They have climbed up the ladder by working and saving, specializing in certain occupations (Chinese laundries, Korean groceries), passing their "human capital" on from one generation to the next, and above all,

keeping nuclear families together.

Unfortunately, black people aren't thinking in these terms. As one speaker in Nashville put it, "Every immigrant group has climbed the ladder by forcing the government to give up its share of wealth in American society. We are all in one fashion or another dependent on the government." That just about says it.

Ironically, the only other group that did use this strategy—politics instead of economics—to climb the social ladder is the Irish. As Sowell points out, they have been the *least* successful of any immigrant group that migrated from Europe or Asia, even though they've been here the longest. On the other hand, groups that suffered discrimination and political oppression that was often worse than anything black people have undergone since slavery—the Chinese and Japanese on the West Coast, for example—have ignored politics, put their nose to the grindstone, and are now significantly *above* the average of even *white* Americans in economic success.

Thus, as Sowell fervently points out, black people are *not at all that different* from any other ethnic group in America—certainly not as different as they would like to imagine themselves. What is different about them (and about Puerto Ricans, who are rapidly following in their footsteps) is that they have become entrapped in the sinister blandishments of the welfare system.

"The welfare system makes an irresistible offer to every eligible female over the age of 16," says George Gilder, whose totally ignored book, *Visible Man*, is one of the most sensitive, sympathetic, and clear-eyed por-

traits ever made of black welfare culture. "It says to every black female teenager, 'You may be poor, you may have family problems, and you may be discouraged about your future. But if you have a baby *right now*, we will give you your own apartment, free medical care, food stamps, and a regular income over the next 20 years. If you have another baby soon after, we will increase your allotment.'

"How many black men—poor or affluent—can match that offer?" Gilder asks. "How many teenage girls *anywhere*—black or white, poor or affluent—can afford their *own apartment* and pay their *own medical expenses* at age 16?"

"These teenage girls who drop out of school and have babies are not ignorant, they are not morally weak, and they are not sexually lascivious," he says. "They are simply rational human beings making the most intelligent choice on how to improve their economic condition."

Welfare workers that I have talked to say that when they sometimes try to encourage teenagers to have abortions, or to put the children up for adoption, the girls and their families treat them as if they were crazy. These people perceive—correctly—that their babies are worth income, and can often quote what their welfare benefits are going to be right down to the last dollar.

That is why we have an epidemic of black teenage pregnancy. No amount of "counseling," "individual therapy," and "sex-education courses"—the usual nostrums paraded out in Nashville—is ever going to steer this epidemic even slightly off course.

Now, of course, somebody is prob-



ably already saying, "But this whole argument is wrong. Black people are not an immigrant group. They were here before the Mayflower, and they *still* haven't been given the chance to succeed."

I suppose that is right. In truth, Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams, the other leading black dissident economist who is trying to encourage blacks to forget about slavery and treat themselves as just another striving ethnic group, are swimming upstream. It is probably more accurate to say that black people were once America's peasantry. They sometimes seem almost inexorably tied to the Old South—even more than the New South itself is today.

The characteristic of any landed aristocratic society, of course, is that it has no middle class. Everyone in such societies—from rich plantation owner to indigent tenant farmer—turns his nose up at shopkeepers, manufacturers, and anyone who engages in "trade."

As I sat among this huge delegation of college professors, hospital administrators, doctors, lawyers, and foundation executives for three days, I heard only the vaguest references to the possibility that blacks might start their own businesses, create jobs to employ other blacks, or develop specific occupational skills, the way the Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Italians, Jamaicans, and most other immigrant groups have done. All anybody ever talked about was how to get *other people* to do these things for them, and how to get more money out of the government.

When it came to discussing the ac-

tual mechanisms of preventing family break-ups, the talk was even more irrelevant. There was a lot of chatter about divorce rates, similar break-ups among white families, and the need for "better communications between family members."

What was completely missing is the understanding that black families are not really "breaking up" at all. Instead, *black families are no longer forming*. When women start "families," they no longer look for a husband. They simply marry the state.

What black women are discovering is one of those inherent biological truths long suppressed by social conventions. When you get right down to it, for a woman who wants to have a baby, the whole business of finding a husband to support her while she takes care of the children (or to take care of the children while she supports them) is really a tedious, potentially fruitless, undertaking. If the government can make a better offer, why refuse it? What's a few hours waiting in welfare lines, compared to a lifetime of having to put up with an unpredictable, emotionally draining, potentially violent man?

In reality, the "black family" is not "breaking up" at all. It is simply kicking black men out of the house and taking in the government as the breadwinner.

This devastating, unprecedented pattern of government "paternalism" is searingly illustrated by one of the most exhaustive studies ever made on American social patterns: *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom: 1750-1925*, published in 1977 by

Herbert Gutman, a professor of sociology at the City University of New York.

Gutman illustrated that, contrary to all the banter about contemporary black family problems being the "legacy of slavery" or a "product of African institutions," black nuclear families actually remained heroically intact, not only through slavery, but

Thomas Sowell's and Walter Williams's presence hung like disembodied spirits over the proceedings in Nashville. (At one point, an academic economist, who was presenting the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill as the solution to black family problems, looked around the room and whispered to the audience, "Walter Williams isn't here today, is he?")

The black family was more than strong enough to survive slavery. It was just not strong enough to survive the welfare system.

right through the backlash against Reconstruction and into the early years of the twentieth century.

The black family was more than strong enough to survive the ordeal of slavery. Gutman relates tragic accounts of black men and women walking up and down the countryside after the Civil War searching for wives, husbands, or children from whom they had become separated during the chaos of the conflict. Advertisements for lost spouses and children were still appearing in black newspapers as late as the 1880s.

This survival continued right through the 1930s. One study of ethnic groups in Boston in the early part of the century revealed that the rate of "broken families" among blacks was actually lower than among most other ethnic groups—only around 10 percent, at a time when illegitimacy in Irish families was running over 30 percent.

Black social patterns were ruined only when liberals arrived on the scene in the 1930s with their "Aid to Families With Dependent Children" and other blandishments to "let the state do for people what they aren't capable of doing for themselves." The tragedy occurred because blacks *trusted* the system. They didn't have the inherent suspicions to resist government assistance and avoid sympathetic bureaucrats like the plague—as many ethnic groups did then and still do today. (It should be noted, of course, that the devastation caused by AFDC is in no way particular to blacks. It is even worse among Puerto Ricans, and has been seen almost everywhere that the welfare system has gotten its foot in the door.)

No, the black family was more than strong enough to survive slavery. It was just not strong enough to survive the welfare system.

To be fair, there is among black leaders a growing undercurrent of recognition of this state of affairs.

But, of course, once middle-class black leaders do recognize the problem, they will find themselves on the other horn of their dilemma. They will come under fire as "elitists" and "sell-outs" of the black lower class. They will be charged with "talking the white man's talk," just as they now accuse Sowell and Williams of "adopting the language of the oppressors" and "going over to the other side."

But perhaps it isn't even fair to ask black people to think about these things. After all, for all the miseries and tribulations they have undergone in American history, it is an almost unbearable irony to think that a wrongheaded "charity" has sunk them into an even deeper poverty. This time it is not merely their freedoms and opportunities that have been taken away, but their very families—the institution that anthropologists now believe was originally responsible for human evolution itself.

Do we have to go on this way? I don't see why. Nobody is suggesting scrapping the entire welfare system and turning women, children, the elderly, and the crippled out into the street. All we have to do is change a few incentives.

Here are two simple suggestions: 1) welfare payments should be made only to *intact* families, unless either the husband or wife is deceased; and 2) no welfare payments should be made for any baby born before the mother turns 21. This would be more in line with the "family allowances" offered in all other Western countries—which are *not* suffering from epidemics of family break-up. It would simply restore the original intent to a program that was designed to help "widows and orphans," and was never conceived as becoming an outright subsidy to illegitimacy and "single-parent families."

All right, I admit it, I can already hear the American Civil Liberties Union—those undying "friends" of



black people—screaming that women have a “constitutional right” to have babies without latching on to a husband, and that teenage girls have a “constitutional right” to get pregnant any time they want. I’m not even going to try to cope with the legal sophistries of that one.

But here’s a countersuggestion. My wife and I have just become parents, and we’ve started reading a lot of those

“First-Three-Years-of-Life”-type books. She was looking through one the other day and came across a section about the importance of fathers in developing children’s intelligence. The current theory is that fathers play a very crucial role in developing a child’s native intellectual abilities.

Some psychologists decided to test the idea, and when they set out to find a large group of children who *didn’t*

have fathers—wouldn’t you know it—the first place they looked was among American blacks. Sure enough, they found that black children who *don’t* have fathers at home test significantly lower on intelligence tests than otherwise identical black children who *do* have fathers in the home.

Now let me ask you this: Is there a black leader or civil-liberties attorney *anywhere* in this whole land who is

ready to start a class-action suit to reform the welfare system on behalf of all *black children*, on the grounds that they have a “constitutional right” to develop their genetically endowed intelligence by growing up with a father in their home?

If there is, I have a message for you. I am prepared to sit down anywhere with you at the soonest possible convenience and buy you a drink. □

Robert Asahina

I.F. STONE, SELF-CRAFTED ICON

A long, hard look at a venerated Old Left/New Left troublemaker.

Old iconoclasts never die, they just become icons themselves. “If you live long enough,” I.F. Stone once said, “you get accused of things you never did and praised for virtues you never had.” That was in 1971, the year he shut down *I.F. Stone’s Weekly* (actually biweekly since 1968), the four-page Washington newsletter of which he was the sole editor, writer, researcher, copy editor, proofreader, typographer, assistant to the circulation manager (his wife, Esther), and chief PR man. Today, at the age of 76, he’s lived long enough to see at least half of his prophecy come true.

Stone founded the *Weekly* in 1953 partly because he couldn’t get a job anywhere else. The three left-wing papers he worked for between 1940 and 1952—*PM*, the *New York Star*, and the *New York Daily Compass*—had folded. His old part-time position of Washington correspondent for the *Nation*, which he held between 1940 and 1946, had been filled by someone else. And the *New York Post*, for which he had written editorials from 1933 to 1939, was—under the command of a former *PM* colleague, James Wechsler—no longer congenial to the radical politics Stone still espoused at the height of the McCarthy era.

So starting his own journal was, as he put it, a “last resort.” It was to be a “radical paper, fighting the witch

hunt and the cold war,” the product of a self-described “independent capitalist . . . a wholly independent newspaperman.” Stone began with 5,000 subscribers and claimed the *Weekly* was in the black from the very first issue. After ten years, it had 20,000 subscribers; by 1968, 40,000; during its final year, more than 70,000.

Long before then, Stone ceased to be a journalistic outsider. Widespread opposition to the Vietnam war, which he had criticized from its start, had made him something of a cult hero in the sixties. (The *Weekly* picked up

5,000 subscribers after he was a guest on the “Dick Cavett” show in 1969.) Paeans to Stone’s political prescience began appearing in mid-decade, first in the radical press (*Ramparts*) and the liberal journals of opinion (the *New Republic*, *Commonweal*), then in the news magazines (profiles in both *Newsweek* and *Time*), finally in the slick magazines (*Life* and even *McCall’s*).

Stone started receiving other kinds of recognition as well. He won a George Polk Award in 1971 (“my first Establishment award,” he said). A

documentary, *I.F. Stone’s Weekly*, narrated by Tom Wicker, was made in 1973. The University of Pennsylvania, which Stone had left in 1927 after three years as an undergraduate, gave him a bachelor’s degree (Class of ’28) in a one-man graduation ceremony in 1975. His 70th birthday was celebrated by 350 people in the Grand Ballroom of the Plaza; E.Y. “Yip” Harburg (“Over the Rainbow”) wrote him a birthday song. The National Press Club readmitted Stone in 1981, 33 years after he resigned in protest for being refused service when he brought a black friend (a former federal judge and aide to the Secretary of War) to lunch.

In 1981 Stone was also featured on “Sixty Minutes,” and Ed Bradley praised his “sincerity and dedication to free thought.” And last year, Stone made the front page of the “Style” section of the *Washington Post* for his “latest scoop”: his new translation and interpretation of Greek philosophy, which led him to attack Socrates and Plato in a crowded two-hour lecture at Georgetown University, sponsored by the Institute for Policy Studies.

All this could be merely a long-overdue acknowledgement of a prematurely right man of the Left. “For years,” *McCall’s* gushed, “Stone was treated as a social and political pariah in Washington, because he stood up for civil liberties and for racial justice and against witch-hunting. During the last several years, however, he has found himself not only socially and politically acceptable,



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but an exalted hero in the pantheon of the peace movement." Stone regards his recent acclaim differently, and diffidently: "How glad I've been not to have agreed about Castro," he said upon his return to the National Press Club. "How glad I've been not to have agreed about Vietnam. How glad I've been not to have agreed about McCarthy. My proudest awards are my scars."

"Lifelong dissent," he wrote in 1969, "has more than acclimated me cheerfully to defeat." Now that he's become so acclimated to success that he can, like LBJ, show off his scars, it's worth taking a second look at how he got them.

"When I was a boy," Stone has said, "I believed that a newspaperman ought to use his power on behalf of those who are getting the dirty end of the deal." In the twenties and thirties, this meant espousing socialism, at least to many writers who were, like Stone, the children of Jewish immigrants. But the radicalism of this much acclaimed and self-proclaimed "independent man of the Left" has often kept him from being in the right.

In the August 26, 1939 issue of the *Nation*, for example, Stone was one of "more than 400" signers (including Corliss Lamont and Max Lerner) of an open letter, dated August 10 of that year, addressed "to all active supporters of democracy and Peace." Intended to refute criticisms of the Soviet Union by "fascists and their friends" (John Dewey and others, that is), the letter disparaged "the fantastic falsehood that the USSR and the totalitarian states are basically alike" and insisted that "Soviet and fascist policies are dramatically opposed."

But the front page of the very same issue of the *Nation* announced the signing of the Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact. And in the next issue, the

editors wrote that "the events of the past week [i.e., the German invasion of Poland from the west, which was to be followed by the Russian invasion of Poland from the east] serve as an effective commentary on the claims of the 400 signers."

How did Stone react to this shattering of the Popular Front illusion that, as he put it, "the Soviet Union was the core of the world front against

as those who are going to vote for Truman and the bipartisan Cold War, and expect to get peace, housing, and better prices . . . Wallace has had his effect on both parties already, and a big vote for peace in November might have its effect, too." In other words, what's important is preserving your purity, even if it means throwing away your vote.

Of course, "peace" is one of those

When he began the *Weekly* thirty years ago, Stone predicted: "I'm going to graduate from a pariah to a character, and then if I last long enough I'll be regarded as a national institution."

fascism"? By blaming the *British*. "Chamberlain's desire for further 'appeasement' is shown, above all, in the interminable delay in negotiating a Soviet pact," he wrote in the *Nation* (September 23, 1939), after mulling over the matter for three weeks. "The Kremlin was at the same time prepared to come to an agreement with Germany as an alternative." Chamberlain, according to Stone, hoped that "failure to obtain the pact would lead the Poles to surrender." Just as "London surrendered Czechoslovakia in the hope of pushing Hitler east, Moscow handed Danzig and the Corridor to Hitler in the hope that he would go west."

Although such tortuous reasoning could be called radical, it was scarcely "independent"; it was, in fact, the party line. Indeed, as recently as 1974, no less a respected liberal than Richard Rovere could still attack Stone (in Philip Nobile's *Intellectual Skywriting*) for being a "Stalinist." And Rovere should know; he edited the pieces Stone wrote for the Communist *New Masses*.

Actually, Rovere was being a trifle unfair; no orthodox Stalinist would have defended Trotskyist union activists, as Stone did in 1941. But that could be attributed to a general policy of *pas d'ennemis à gauche*; he was still a long way from openly breaking with the Communist Party and the Soviet Union.

In 1948, for instance, he cheerfully confessed to being a "dupe" for the party in supporting Henry Wallace for President. "I admit everything," Stone wrote. "The Communists are doing a major part of the work of the Wallace movement, from ringing doorbells to framing platforms. Okay, if you want it that way, so they 'dominate' the party. So what?" In a disingenuous mix of candor and irony, he argued: "But I don't think I'm quite as big a dupe

loaded words in Popular Front rhetoric, though not as loaded as "war." Consider Stone's 1952 book, *The Hidden History of the Korean War*. It is "no accident" (to use Marxist jargon that Stone would recognize) that his main argument neatly tracked the Moscow line: The United States was indirectly responsible for the conflict. Of course, there was the inconvenient fact that the North Koreans, not the South, crossed the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950, but even that could be explained away. Opposed to reunification, plagued with domestic difficulties, and supported by Chiang Kai-shek (and to a lesser degree by President Truman and General MacArthur), "Syngman Rhee provoked the attack from the North," according to Stone.

It's impossible to resist noting that Stone himself provided the best rebuttal to this kind of reasoning. In a 1953 *Weekly* article, he criticized John Foster Dulles for believing (in 1935) that "the road to peace . . . was to give Germany, Italy and Japan what they wanted." (Stone should talk, given his own record on Poland!) Dulles, he continued, "somehow made the *aggressed* rather than the aggressor seem to blame for what was happening." So much for blaming the victim.

It wasn't until 1956 that Stone could announce, with a drama that today seems comical, that a trip to the Soviet Union made him feel "like a swimmer under water who must rise to the surface or his lungs will burst." The USSR, he finally realized, "*is not a good society and it is not led by honest men.*" The italics are his, and they cost him 5,000 subscribers, as he never fails to remind people in an effort to demonstrate his "independence."

Independence from what? Certainly not from viewing the world through

rosy lenses. John Dewey's commission of inquiry into the Moscow trials had exposed the horrors of Stalinism in 1937, but Dewey and his collaborators were "fascists." Stone couldn't be moved by the facts until they came from what he seemed to regard as a more reliable source—Nikita Khrushchev in his "De-Stalinization" speech before the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956.

The point is not merely that Stone was a rather unapologetic apologist long after diehard fellow travelers had abandoned ship. What's equally important is the way he has, true to his own prediction, come to be "praised for virtues" that he "never had": independence and a commitment to the truth. It's one thing to be wrong; everybody makes mistakes, particularly journalists, who are too often so caught up in day-to-day events that they miss the significance of what they're reporting. (Characteristically, Stone has preempted this line of criticism. "A writer gives his reader an earnest of his dependability if he's not afraid to be inconsistent," he once said. "The world looks different from week to week.")

It's another thing, however, to be wrongheaded, particularly since Stone's journalistic methods have earned so much praise. ("Laying waste to whole hamlets of bureaucrats with the weapon they feared most: facts," was how *Life* described it.) "I had no inside information," Stone said in the film named after his paper. "I tried to dig the truth out of hearings, official transcripts and government documents, and to be as accurate as possible," he wrote on another occasion. "I tried in every issue to provide fact and opinion not available elsewhere in the press."

Of course, "one man's fact is another man's delete" (as Dwight Macdonald once said). Stone's "facts" reveal the "truth" only to readers who



accept his definition of journalism: "My job here (at the *Weekly*) is to notice things that most reporters overlook and to analyze these events from a radical point of view."

This was, to be sure, an effective technique in the early-to-mid-sixties. Lyndon Johnson's "credibility gap" and the Pentagon's "numbers games" were choice targets for journalists who took the time to read between the lines of presidential speeches, official pronouncements, bureaucratic reports, congressional transcripts. And it is to Stone's credit that he did, that he was truly an "investigative reporter." ("All journalism is investigative," Stone has said dismissively, but there's a world of difference between a reporter who actually reads a government White Paper and one who thinks the best way to get at the truth is to allow himself to be manipulated by self-serving sources whose "leaks" are impossible for a reader to assess, since they've been guaranteed anonymity.)

But how "radical" was Stone's journalism? By the late fifties, he had already arrived at a fairly predictable set of political positions that dovetailed neatly into mainstream liberalism: in favor of racial justice, "peaceful coexistence," disarmament, recognition of Communist China; against segregation, the "military-industrial complex," HUAC, the Cold War, John Foster Dulles, Joe McCarthy. And by the early sixties, in the light of the civil rights movement and the shadow of the Vietnam war, the Old Left and the New could easily join hands in opposing George Wallace, General Curtis LeMay, McGeorge Bundy, Robert McNamara, Richard Nixon, Mayor Richard Daley, Barry Goldwater.

Stone took part in some of the first "teach-ins" (remember them?) and soon became a familiar name and sight to "the Movement." Eventually, however, his "independence" reasserted itself, not in his relationship to Moscow but in his attitude toward extremists on the Left. In 1970, he called the Weathermen "spoiled brats." "I do not like much of what they are saying and doing. I do not like to hear opponents shouted down, much less beaten up," he wrote in the *Weekly*. "I hate, hate, intolerance and violence." "What their revolt is against is man himself," he said in an interview in, of all places, *Christian Century* (November 4, 1970). "And one of the dangers in that is that perfectionism can be a horror."

Nonetheless, he was careful to temper his criticisms with forthright admiration for "the most sensitive of a generation which feels in its bones what we older people only grasp as an unreal abstraction, that the world is headed for nuclear annihilation and

something must be done to stop it." Agreement on ends, disagreement on means: Was Stone turning into a liberal apologist for radicalism? Or was this just another variation on his past Popular Front strategy?

Any doubts on this score could be put to rest by Stone's criticisms of Israel, which increasingly isolated him from the American Jewish community after the mid-sixties. On the surface, he seemed to have flipped 180 degrees from his position of twenty years earlier. In the forties he had been an ardent Zionist, decorated by the *Haganah*. As a reporter, he had followed the trail of "illegal" Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe to Palestine, and had written a quite moving account of their plight, *Underground to Palestine*, published in 1946.

By 1956, however, he had begun to characterize his Zionism ironically. "Because so many bonds attach me to Israel," he wrote after Suez, "I am ready to condone preventive war; I rejoiced when my side won. I too, like the rest of them (and maybe you), am a hypocrite." And by 1968, he was quick to condemn Israel as "a steep and arid mountain of prejudice" for its treatment of the Palestinians.

What happened? Stone's about-face can best be understood, once again, against the background of Soviet policy, which had favored Israel in the forties, but shifted to the Arab states in the late fifties. Even *Underground to Palestine*, when examined with the attention that Stone gave to government documents, is revealing in this regard, though perhaps unconsciously so; the villain of the book turns out

to be (guess who?) the *British*, for "trying to build an alliance with the Moslem upper classes in the Middle East against the Soviet Union." And Stone proudly quotes the reaction of Ivan Mikhailovich Maisky, the Russian Ambassador to Britain, after a visit to a kibbutz: "We have reached socialism, but you [Jews] have already achieved communism." What a disappointment to the Soviet Union, not to mention Stone, that the British should cease to play an important role in the Middle East after Suez (no more devil theory of history!), and that Israel should wind up being so embarrassingly pro-West.

Stone has been consistent about one thing: a binational Israeli-Palestinian state, which he advocated even in *Underground to Palestine*, and continues to argue for today. He probably *thinks* he's been consistent in his attitude toward terrorism in the Middle East. But the change in his arguments over the years reflects a predictable double standard. Thirty-five years ago he criticized the Irgun and the Stern Gang for their terrorist activities in Tel Aviv, then under British martial law. In 1982, on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*, he laboriously tried to draw the analogy indicated by the title of the piece: "When Tel Aviv was 'West Beirut.'" "Can we Jews not recognize the image in our mirrors?" he asked, condemning the massacre in Lebanon while trying backhandedly to justify the activities of the PLO. "Who better than we should understand Palestinian desperation and homelessness?"

Stone seems to have forgotten what he carefully noted 38 years ago, that the leaders of the nascent Jewish state did not support the Stern Gang then,

as the Arab states do the PLO today. "The *Haganah* are no more gangsters than were the men of Concord or Lexington," he wrote in the *Nation* (January 12, 1946). "Its leaders are bitterly critical of the Jerusalem bombing (by Jewish terrorists)." And he would probably *like* to forget what he wrote in a series of articles for the *New Republic* after Israel achieved statehood in 1948: "Fear of an armed Jewish state seems the best way to make the Arab nations accept peace." Critical of any plan to "reduce Israel in size or sovereignty," Stone argued emphatically that "more desert is the least of Arab needs." But now things are different: It's okay, evidently, when Jews are martyrs, refugees in search of a homeland, or beleaguered defenders of an infant state; it's another matter when they are a power in their own right.

No doubt Stone has managed to offend more than a few Jews with his ideas about the Holocaust. In the *Christian Century* interview, he was asked, "Were you particularly affected by the genocide of World War II?" His answer: "Well, you don't have to go to such dramatic effects as a holocaust; one child born without an arm, or blind, is enough." Is he really unable to distinguish between a chance birth defect—an act of God, if you will—and a monstrous crime perpetrated by man against man?

And is Stone really serious in claiming that his views on Israel aren't being given a fair hearing in the media? "On the Middle East, freedom of debate is not encouraged," he charged in 1978. "In the past twenty-four years I have been asked to speak in a synagogue only once. . . . Finding an American publishing house willing to publish a book that departs from the standard Israeli line is about as easy as selling a thoughtful exposition of atheism to the *Osservatore Romano* in Vatican City."

That complaint appeared as part one of the epilogue to a new edition of *Underground to Palestine*, published by Pantheon, a subsidiary of Random House, one of the largest American trade publishers. The piece originally ran as an article ("Confessions of a Jewish Dissident") in the March 8, 1978, issue of the *New York Review of Books*. A companion piece, "The Other Zionism," which became part two of the epilogue, first appeared in the September 1978 *Harper's*. If Stone isn't satisfied with that much exposure (not to mention regular appearances on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* and other papers), I'd be interested to know how much he thinks he needs for true "freedom of debate" on Israel.



When he began the *Weekly* thirty years ago, Stone predicted: "I'm going to graduate from a pariah to a character, and then if I last long enough I'll be regarded as a national institution." He certainly reached Stage Two a long time ago; by the late sixties, he was being described, sympathetically, as a "chubby cherub" (in the *New Republic*). This "premier loner and dedicated maverick of American journalism" (the *New York Times*) had become, by the early seventies, "a merry, pixielike sixty-three-year-old man with dimpled cheeks and double bifocal glasses" (*McCall's*), "a hero with enough warts to produce a satisfying image . . . the Establishment's favorite rebel, the Rebellion's favorite establishmentarian" (*Ramparts*).

Maybe to prove that he isn't just a "character," during the past decade Stone has reverted to Popular Front form in his semi-retirement. After he closed the *Weekly*, he sold its mailing list to the *New York Review of Books*, of which he became a contributing editor. But in 1976, the magazine published an unfavorable review of John Chabot Smith's *Alger Hiss: The True Story* by Allen Weinstein, who was later to argue in his own book, *Perjury*, that Hiss was "guilty as charged," that he "did in fact perjure himself." Stone, reportedly "terribly upset and unhappy" (perhaps even more so because Weinstein's piece was featured on the cover of the issue along with his own article on Daniel Schorr), resigned from the *Review*, though he has continued to write for it.

And in his recent op-ed pieces for the *New York Times*, Stone has taken a position on Russia that differs little from his stance of 40 years ago. In 1980, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, he wrote: "We can now see by hindsight how beautifully—even providentially—the Soviet invasion fit the needs of American politics.

. . . If the Russians suddenly withdraw from Afghanistan, the American Presidential campaign, which now seems in the bag for Carter [!], will be up for a recount. . . . Look at it from a realistic point of view and ask yourself: Do we really want the Russians out of Afghanistan?"

A year later, in another *Times* op-ed article, he speculated, "Perhaps we keep the enemy alive because if the Soviet Union ever dropped dead of hunger, there would also be starvation here, though of another kind, in our military-industrial complex. . . . What would the Pentagon do without Moscow?" What's depressing about such rhetoric is how little it reflects new analysis, how much it rehashes stale Popular Front arguments. Stone once claimed in the *Nation* that "the bogey of Communism" was "a method of diverting attention from real problems to imaginary ones." That was in 1937, though it could have been written yesterday, for all the difference the intervening years have made to Stone's understanding of politics.

To his credit, as he never stops telling anyone who will listen (like those 34 million viewers of "Sixty Minutes"), Stone has recently ventured into a new area of study: classical Greek. He has taught himself the language and picked up the philosophy books he left behind at the University of Pennsylvania in 1927. His first translations—of poems by Sappho, Aeschylus, and others—were published in the *New York Review of Books* in 1979. And his new interpretations of Socrates and Plato appeared in the *New York Times Magazine* (1979) and *Harper's* (1981).

Along with his recent Georgetown lecture, these articles contain the main themes of a book he is planning to write that will "enrich the past by seeing it anew through the eyes of the present." There's a name for this kind of selective reading: historicism. And

it's not likely to result in accurate translations or interpretations.

Consider Stone's charge that Plato was an "elitist" whose dialogues were "glamorous packaging" for the "ancient and disdainful notion" that "ordinary people cannot be trusted to govern themselves." According to Stone, "nobody ever got away with so much unmitigated nonsense as Plato did out of sheer charm." But such a claim is based on an extremely crude

pressed "the ethos of the landed aristocracy."

This class-based analysis of "elitism" simply ignores the primacy of the question of *virtue* in the *Republic*. Stone would have Socrates be a modern bourgeois individualist concerned with personal freedom, instead of a philosopher concerned with virtue and its complicated relationship to the *polis*. As proof of Socrates' anti-democratic tendencies, Stone cites the

"How glad I've been not to have agreed about Castro. How glad I've been not to have agreed about Vietnam. How glad I've been not to have agreed about McCarthy. My proudest awards are my scars."

reading of the Platonic dialogues. Here's Stone on his method: "You reexamine all the source material for yourself. You go back to the texts in the original language, so that you can evaluate every nuance. You search out internal contradictions. It's not so different from digging the real truth out of a Pentagon or State Department document."

In fact, it is very different. Plato wrote dialogues, not transcripts, reports, or White Papers. (Did Stone ever stop to think that those "contradictions" might be deliberate rhetorical and philosophical strategies?) And it's a mistake simply to identify the words of any of the characters—whether Socrates in the *Apology* or the *Republic*, or the Athenian Stranger in the *Laws*—with the teaching of Plato (just as it would be to attribute Hamlet's sentiments to Shakespeare). To use contemporary terminology (not Plato's) that Stone would understand, the "form" of the dialogues is inseparable from their "content." Stone must come to grips with Platonic irony before confidently announcing what Plato did or did not say or believe.

As for the Greeks' attitude toward "democracy," Stone seems to think that "freedom" is an absolute value that meant (or should have meant) the same thing in fourth-century Athens as it does in twentieth-century America. "Plato made Socrates the secular martyr of the struggle against democracy," says Stone. "The case against Socrates was political," and "the charge of corrupting the youth was based on a belief—and considerable evidence—that he was undermining their faith in Athenian democracy." As Stone sees it, "the lower classes were bred or bullied into believing the myth that they are intrinsically inferior to their rulers," who ex-

pressed "the ethos of the landed aristocracy." This class-based analysis of "elitism" simply ignores the primacy of the question of *virtue* in the *Republic*. Stone would have Socrates be a modern bourgeois individualist concerned with personal freedom, instead of a philosopher concerned with virtue and its complicated relationship to the *polis*. As proof of Socrates' anti-democratic tendencies, Stone cites the "damaging fact" that he remained in Athens during the reign of the Thirty Tyrants. This supposedly showed Socrates' affinity for tyranny, confirming the accusation made later that he was "undermining . . . faith in Athenian democracy" and thus deserved to die. But some of the Platonic virtues (like justice) are rooted in the city, others in the activity of philosophy, which has ends that are very different from those of politics. Stone should try to learn which are which before explaining them all away as "political" in motivation or rooted in a simple-minded and anachronistic model of class struggle.

It's possible to regard Stone's current study of the classics as the harmless pastime of a colorful old gentleman, or as genuine (though failed) scholarship. But it is neither. Stone is uninterested in disinterested research, though he takes very seriously the "familiar story of Greek civilization as it relates to . . . what concerns me most: freedom of thought and expression, and how to preserve it against the new excuses for repression bound to arise in every generation."

It might seem immodest for Stone to criticize the father of Western philosophy, but humility has never been one of his virtues. (He says his "academic qualifications" include "chutzpah plus zest plus temerity.") At various times he's also suggested a comparison between himself and Moses as well as Isaiah. Indeed, the Greek and the Jewish traditions are the opposing poles of his own philosophy. Call them the rational and the prophetic, the libertarian and the egalitarian traditions—or, as they manifest themselves in Stone's thoroughly modern world-view, "Jeffersonianism" and "Marxism."



Of course, his Jefferson has about as much to do with the real Founding Father as his Marx does with the actual father of Communism. "Jeffersonianism" means simply freedom of thought to Stone. "Milton and Jefferson are my heroes," he has said. "The role of the press as 'Fourth Estate' we owe to Jefferson. It is peculiarly American. . . . The only absolute value . . . is freedom of the mind." For Stone, this has always entailed an absolutist position on the First Amendment. During the McCarthy era, he was proud he "had not confined [himself] like a respectable liberal to mistaken identity cases"; he even defended Cedric Belfrage, editor of the Communist *National Guardian*, who was deported in 1955. (By the way, does Stone regard as "damaging" the fact that he himself remained in the United States during the McCarthy era and other periods when he was a "pariah"?)

But it has also led him to exaggerate the significance of constitutionalism, as if it were independent of social structure, history, and politics. In 1937, he praised "the establishment of a constitution [in the USSR] which moves, at least formally, toward the adoption of democratic practices. . . . There is only one party, but the introduction of the secret ballot offers workers and peasants a weapon against bureaucratic and inefficient officials and their policies." As if bureaucracy and inefficiency were the real dangers!

Still, his libertarianism has more often been a check on his Marxism. Freedom of thought and speech, Stone has conceded, is "threatened by authoritarianism everywhere, on the Left as on the Right, by Communist as well as by Catholic." And in 1948, even before he formally broke with the USSR, he wrote: "I know that if the Communists came to power, I'd soon

find myself eating cold *kasha* in a concentration camp in Kansas *gubernya*."

His comic characterization of that possibility suggests how remote he regards it as being. In the meantime, he has continued to espouse a socialism that has become little more than the simple faith that he's caught the right historical train. (It is, he has fervently proclaimed many times, "an essential fact about the modern world" that "socialism is coming everywhere.") But as long as he enjoys the protection of the First Amendment, safe in his native land with its unique history and society, Stone can indulge in the fantasy of a "synthesis . . . of Marx and Jefferson" (the "greatest task of our time"), without having to break the vow he made as a young reporter to be "independent," "not to join in those stale surrenders which are called the practical realities of the world." (Like what? Voting responsibly?

Reporting accurately, and without bias?)

"Politically, I suppose I am what everybody right or left calls a troublemaker," Stone wrote in the early fifties. But nobody's called him that for a long time. "As respectability darkens my door," he announced in the early seventies, "it's sort of comforting to know someone still thinks I'm a dangerous man." But does anyone these days? In his old age, Stone has finally become a "national institution" with an institutional affiliation: Distinguished Scholar in Residence at American University, where he is busy criticizing Socrates for calling himself "the gadfly" of Athens [even though] it seems his sting was not much in evidence when Athens needed it most [during the reign of the Thirty Tyrants]. In his old age, Socrates was given hemlock by the democratic citizens of Athens. Need any more be said? □

John Lukacs

TWO-FACED GERMANY

Having it both ways is an old German tradition.

One of the stupidest ideas of our times is that we live in a revolutionary age. We are told that our lives are so difficult because we cannot find ourselves in these times when things change so fast, in these times of the frightful acceleration of history. The opposite is true. We live in a time of dreadful stagnation.

Thirty-nine years ago an era in world history had come to an end. The Second World War was over. Germany was conquered. Two Superpowers remained in the world. Their confrontation grew out of their division of Europe, within which took place the division of Germany, within which took place the division of Berlin. In thirty-nine years the essentials of this condition have not changed.

John Lukacs's most recent book is Outgrowing Democracy: A History of the United States in the Twentieth Century (Doubleday).

Thirty-nine years after the First World War another world war had come and gone, and the world had changed beyond recognition. Thirty-nine years after Waterloo Europe had been convulsed by three waves of revolutions; its map (and the map of the United States) had been drastically remade.

I am not only thinking of the political map of Europe and Germany: I am thinking, too, of the ways in which people live and of the ideas that rule them. In 1984 the gods of The Copy-Book Headings are Darwin, Marx, Freud, Einstein, Picasso; the ruling ideas are Evolution, Progress, Technology, Sex Education, Female Emancipation, Atomic Science, Modernization. So they were in 1924. In 1884 the European world was ruled by Bismarck, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Wagner, Spencer, Manet—planetary years away from 1824, from the world of Metternich, Goethe, Chateau-

briand, Byron, Rossini, Ingres.

The intellectual best-seller of this season is the Englishman Paul Johnson's history of the twentieth century, entitled *Modern Times*. I haven't read this book yet but the title is surely wrong. The 1920s were the last modern decade.

The Germans are a people who are slow in changing their minds. But once they change their minds . . .

On one level Germany reverted to the twenties; on another level it had not.

About twenty-five years ago the Swiss journalist F.R. Allemann, an intelligent and perceptive observer of the German political scene, wrote a cogent little book, entitled *Bonn Ist Nicht Weimar*, Bonn Is Not Weimar. His thesis was that the West German state and nation were largely immune to the sickness that had destroyed the

Weimar Republic and helped to bring Hitler to power. The Bonn constitution and the Federal Republic of Western Germany were soundly democratic, anchored safely to the West. This was true then, and on the level of politics it is still largely true today.

But when Allemann was writing "Weimar" was still a term that evoked mixed associations in Germany. There was no nostalgia for the Weimar period, not even among intellectuals. After World War II the intellectual climate in Germany was conservative, not radical.

During the last twenty years the nostalgia for Weimar has become a staple of the German intellectual and cultural diet. The Weimar writers, artists, theorists, philosophers, from the worst to the best, from Herbert Marcuse to Alfred Döblin, from Georg Lukács to Walter Benjamin, from George Grosz to Kurt Tucholsky have become respectable again; and when in

Germany something becomes respectable, it is chewed over, swallowed, ruminated, again and again.

This goes beyond literature and theories. It is there in the post-modern German buildings which represent a complete reversion to "Modernism": from Bauhaus to Bauhaus. It is there in the grim-scientific "sachlich" preoccupation with sex; in the heavy pancake make-up of the northern German women with their short hair, that cropped boyishness above their determined faces. There are the *dansants* in Baden-Baden and Bad Ems, the couples holding each other tight, the men in their heavy shoes, wide trousers, some of them wearing knickers. The pamphlet of my hotel in Berlin sums up the history of the city. The short paragraph about the twenties says: "The Golden Age of Berlin."

The twenties in Berlin! That miasmatic time of inflation, decadence, agitation, perversion, feverishness, cynicism, self-pity, and despair: Were those the marks of a Golden Age? That Berlin-cosmopolitan paste melted away to near nothing when Hitler threw it in his skillet and the fat began to fry.¹

Well, the twenties was the last modern decade; and since in Germany it was the decade that preceded Hitler and the Third Reich, why shouldn't they have some kind of nostalgia for it?

But keep in mind that there is a relationship, no matter how shabby or complex or subterranean, between *Kultur* and *Politik*, including even pop culture and the great movements in the history of nations. During the last years of the Third Reich, during the conservative reaction after the war,

and during most of the Adenauer era the Germans hoped that their salvation would come from a separate peace with the United States, and from the closest possible association with the West as against the East. Yet in the twenties, as in the seventies and the eighties, German statesmanship proposed again and again (and sometimes successfully) that the place of the German nation was *between* West and East, that there was room and reason for a German *Ostpolitik*, that *Westpolitik* was not enough.

There is not much in this to worry about at this moment. What Allemann wrote twenty-five years ago is still largely true on the political level: Bonn is not Weimar. The Federal Republic is solidly democratic, liberal, Americanized, moderate. Sometimes this moderation is nearly extreme. ("Moderation in everything," said the English wag, "including moderation.") The German parliament voted in favor of the positioning of the new American missiles. The results of the voting were a foregone conclusion, but

¹It would be interesting to research the origins of this resurgent nostalgia for Weimar. It has something to do with the United States, where the entire shoddy *Kulturrevolution* of the 1960s was nothing but a fake repetition of the ideas of the twenties, from the trotting out of old intellectual crocks to the extreme projections of cynicism, from radical chic to the fascination with ugliness and disorder and primitiveness and perversion, the stock-in-trade of Brecht and Weill, and the tangle of *Cabaret*. The "youth" revolution spread from Berkeley to Marburg, and the cult of Weimar from Hollywood to the publishing houses of Madison Avenue and then to Frankfurt and Berlin.

in the halls of the universities hundreds of students watched the debate on television and listened to the droning speeches of the party politicians for hours. In the evening the Greens and the pacifists staged their demonstrations. They were puny little affairs.

There are hardly any Communists in West Germany now. There are hardly

intelligent kind of Green of the Right, a kind of ideology that would appeal to my mind and heart. I didn't find any. As in the United States, the Left has become senile, its ideas comatose. But there are, for the first time, signs that the Americanization of Germany, too, may have run its course. The sentiment underlying the declarations of

In the twenties, as in the seventies and eighties, German statesmanship proposed again and again that the place of the German nation was *between* West and East.

any Nazis. The economic doldrums does not alter this. (In Italy the neo-Fascist party gets nearly ten percent of the vote, and there is reason to believe that a much larger portion of the population harbors sentiments favorable to the Fascist past.) There was a profound difference between the United States and the Germany of Depression. In the United States, the economic catastrophe notwithstanding, the trust of the people in the political system lived on; in Germany it did not. In 1932 about half of the Germans voters chose Nazis or Communists; in 1932 the Communist vote in the United States was 0.25 percent. This difference has disappeared. Germany is the most Americanized country in Europe, surely politically so.

There are other similarities. Until fifty years ago American higher education tried to emulate German university education: that's where the Ph.D. Octopus came from. Now it is in Germany, the Germany of the humanistics and of the classical *Gymnasium*, that a respectable degree in the humanities no longer leads to a respectable job in the civil service or in the corporate world. There, as in the United States, the best money that a diploma can buy comes from a Harvard MBA. In "International Relations," that worldwide fraud, an ambitious German academic now may earn his doctorate in "fields" such as Security Problems (*Sicherheitspolitik*, *Sicherheitskunde*), Systems Analysis, Operational Research.

There is, however, a difference. In the 1920s the Americanization of Germany (again, especially in Berlin) was promoted by the then German Left. Now it is promoted by the German Right.

There are a few disturbing things about this new German Right.

First—in order as well as in importance—there is, as yet, no intelligent or mature conservatism emerging in Germany. As I traveled through Germany I was looking for an

the Greens (a sentiment that many Germans are beginning to share) is anti-Americanism even more than leftism—an inchoate, at times discriminating, more often stupid and cliché-ridden anti-Americanism—but there it is.

Bill Buckley and Irving Kristol are largely unknown in Germany; but the movement among ambitious intellectuals toward the Right has begun. I heard a humorless youngish German professor talk about *Sicherheitspolitik* in terms indistinguishable from those of, say, Mrs. Kirkpatrick or Caspar Weinberger. Unlike (or perhaps not unlike) Mrs. Kirkpatrick, he praised Generals Patton and MacArthur: Why did the Americans not follow them and threaten the Reds with atom bombs in 1945, why did they not push to the east and march into Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Warsaw before the Russians? (It was Churchill—and not Roosevelt or Stimson or Eisenhower or Patton or MacArthur—who understood the danger of the Russian presence in the middle of Europe and in the middle of Germany earlier than others, and who wanted to do something about it. Yet the Germans do not like Churchill; even their historians are unwilling to give him much credit.) Another humorless young German professor read a paper at a Berlin symposium on American foreign policy before Pearl Harbor. He was deadly serious, fresh back from having done his research in the Hoover Institution or in the National Archives, it matters not which. He read long excerpts from documents, citing reams of isolationist statements in 1939, 1940, 1941, from Lindbergh, Herbert Hoover, the Chief of Naval Operations. His purpose was to show that the American internationalists and Roosevelt were full of tricks, and that the isolationists have been proved right: Before Pearl Harbor America was not threatened by Germany, there was no Clear and Present Danger. In a way—but only in a way—he was correct: correct, rather than right.



I decided not to stand it any longer. I stood up: "You cannot have it both ways. You say that Hitler was an aberration, the Third Reich was an ugly and shameful episode, you want to expunge it from German history. Then you regret that the United States, under Roosevelt, helped to destroy the Third Reich. You Germans cannot have it both ways." The audience was silent.

We must keep in mind that, Germany's Western integration and Americanization notwithstanding, the destiny of the Germans was not synchronized with the rest of Europe, not even after 1945.

In 1945 Europe was divided along the Iron Curtain. Germany and Berlin were divided, too; but neither the Russians nor the Americans were yet sure what would happen to the German state and nation. It was only after the Cold War had begun that the division of Germany and of Berlin crystallized in a permanent way; and that division was not total even during the worst of the Stalin years when the rest of the Soviet portion of Europe was closed off from the West, hermetically.

After Stalin, during the late fifties, the contacts between the eastern and the western half of Europe began to grow. In Germany they were brought to a stop. The Wall went up in Berlin in August 1961, shutting the last window between East and West Germany at the very time when elsewhere holes had begun to appear in the Iron Curtain.

Dreadful as it is, the Wall is no more permanent than the Iron Curtain. Ten years after its construction the Germans began to recognize and to take some pleasure from the phrase that Germany consisted of Two States but of One Nation. This preceded and followed Brandt's Ostpolitik. But it went, and it goes, deeper than that. The contempt and the disdain that the West Germans had for the East Germans began to dissipate. Their very phraseology has reflected this. In the 1950s Adenauer and the West Germans referred contemptuously to East Germany as *die Sowjetzone*, the Soviet Zone.² That usage has disappeared completely. Now they have accepted the official East German designation of the German Democratic Republic, the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, the DDR, pronounced Day-Day-Are in German.

²They kept referring, too, to East Germany as "Middle Germany," *Mitteldeutschland*—suggesting at least that "East Germany" consisted, in reality, of those territories that the Germans had lost to Poland, and that still actually belonged to *Deutschland*.

Day-Day-Are. There they are. The contacts between West and East Germany have been gradually increasing. I need not describe their symptoms; others have done so. In its living standards, in its entertainments, in its revival of German traditions East Germany is slowly pulling closer to the West. This is all to the good. Meanwhile West Germany is slowly pulling

There is, as yet, no intelligent or mature conservatism emerging in Germany.

closer to the East. This may or may not be all to the good. At any rate, it means: away from Russia, and away from America. Toward a united Europe? Unlikely. Toward a reunited Germany? Possibly.

There is an essence in this which is historical. For the first time in forty, perhaps fifty, years the admiration for things Prussian has risen again: for Prussian culture, Prussian order, Prussian self-discipline, Prussian probity. This respect for Prussia is an element to be placed next, or above, the nostalgia for Weimar, within that complex three-dimensional puzzle of the present and future of German sentiments and German destiny.

In Berlin I sensed this presence of the East, in that worldly city on that sandy plain, this mixture of revulsion and fascination that the Germans have for Russia and the European East, together with the emulation mixed with apprehension that they have for America and the Far West.

How strange this is: It is now the supposedly "pragmatic" Americans who have come to think in terms of Communism, while it is the supposedly "abstract" Germans who think in terms of Russia.

In any event, this Germany has proved Spengler wrong. Sixty years ago he described and prophesied the proper German symbiosis of anti-capitalism and militarism: *Preussentum und Sozialismus* (1923), Prussianness and Socialism. It is now *Deutschtum und Amerikanismus*, Germanness and Americanism, with the corporate bureaucratization of life, including intellectual life.

Well, the West has declined a little longer than Spengler prophesied: but Germany is healthier than in his lifetime. After all, it was in that sickening atmosphere of defeat and self-pity and Weimar that Spengler was an intellectual best-seller; it was then that his prophecies of *Untergang* (the proper translation of the title of his famous book is not merely the *Decline* but the *Sinking* of the West) were eagerly read and swallowed whole. Now Germany has become homogeneous and

bourgeois as she has not been before . . .

I saw only one university poster reflecting German wit—a rare and therefore precious item—at its best: WIR HABEN DEN KRIEG VERLOREN, WIR WILLEN ES NICHT WIEDER FINDEN. We lost the war. We don't want to find it again. Spengler would have seen it as a Symp-

tom of Decline. I didn't.

I went to Hamburg which was devastated by bombs and a firestorm forty years ago, hardly less than Hiroshima and indeed worse than Nagasaki. Out of her ashes a new and sparkling city has arisen. This includes the poisonous glitter of an entire quarter dedicated by the city fathers to organized sexual excess. But the city includes, too, acres and acres of solid villas, comfortable and cozy, their yellow lights behind their thick windows reflecting the warm fug of German bourgeois family life; patrician houses with a heavy elegance that is traditional and perhaps therefore especially impressive. In the winter evening they glowed with the interior promise of stability and probity.

On a gray morning I went to Hamburg Dammtor station, following a curved walkway that goes through the hallways of what was until recently a luxurious hotel on the Esplanade but

now is an office building. The Dammtor is the second Hamburg railroad station, a mile or so from Hauptbahnhof. I had to take a train to Kiel. There was a German punk in a leather jacket scrawled over with obscenities, shaven bald except for a savage crest of painted hair that was more brutal than military. But he was lost in the milling North German crowd with their severe faces. The buffet was at least fifty years old but spotless, except for the rack of sex magazines bordering it. There were a few smart women, clutching their fur coats. I went up to the platform.

Trains were going through, pulling in, sliding out every two minutes. The city commuter trains, the S-Bahn, were running on the same tracks as the suburban locals and the direct trains and the expresses and the inter-city trains and the trans-Europe night trains. The indicator rang: The numbers dropped down with the time and the name of the next train. Another indicator softly rattled. Another sign showed the composition of the trains with the halting positions of their coaches. This efficiency was vital, not deadening; its source was the duty of service, of human purpose behind the mechanism. Train from Munich. Train to Altona. Train from Frankfurt. Train to Leipzig. (East German coaches.) Train to Amsterdam. Train from Berlin. (West and East German carriages on that one.) The *Mont-Blanc* to Geneva. The *Prinz Eugen* to Vienna. All within fifteen minutes. There, before my eyes, the history of Germany, of the German nation, was going on. Train to Kiel. □



PRESSWATCH



THE METZENBAUM DIFFERENCE

by Fred Barnes

A few months ago, Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina was getting ready to speak to several hundred folks at a fund-raising breakfast when he learned that the press had been barred. He insisted that the reporter from the *Raleigh News & Observer*, a newspaper that regularly excoriates him, be invited in. Old Jesse's mellowing as he cranks up to run for a third Senate term, some of the attendees must have thought. But he quickly rid them of that foolish notion. Helms, true to his convictions, proceeded to tell the crowd and the reporter that, nothing personal, but "your newspaper is a suck-egg mule."

As that episode suggests, Helms is not inclined to court reporters or their editors, a tactic which, for all you might read about how hard-boiled and cynical journalists are, usually works. Reporters crave flattery of a particular sort. It's not gales of praise they want, not transparent stuff like "that article you did on school busing was the best thing on the subject of race since *Uncle Tom's Cabin*." What counts with them is a kind word or fleeting comment that indicates their stories are read and they are taken oh-so-seriously as major players in whatever activity they're covering. Helms doesn't offer much of that. Asked recently if reporters are biased against him, Helms said, "I think a great many reporters are biased against conservatism and a free enterprise system, except for themselves." And in the eyes of reporters, Helms has another flaw, besides being disrespectful: He's not a pragmatic conservative but an ideological one.

So it's small wonder Helms gets a bad press. He doesn't fawn and he's not flexible in his conservatism; these are the two sins that assure him of unacceptability. In fact, he's become so unacceptable that the issues he touches are no longer measured on their merits by the press but are reflexively judged to be irrelevant, kooky, or

simply low-down. Fighting a five-cent boost in the gasoline tax? How could there be anything to the argument that the new tax is harmful if it's Helms who is making the case? Martin Luther King Day? It has to be a smear about Dr. King's alleged ties to Communists or else why would Helms be making the charge? And so on.

Writing in the *New Republic* recently, TRB (a.k.a. Michael Kinsley) fastened on the latest instance in which a legitimate issue was treated as frivolous by the press and thus ignored merely because Helms had raised it. The issue: CIA involvement in the presidential election last May in El Salvador on behalf of moderate Jose Napoleon Duarte, who won. "Helms's charges [of CIA interference] were met with general indifference," TRB wrote:

The only place they got serious ink was *The Washington Times*, a right-wing paper published by the Moonies. . . . The established media paid little attention, and devoted scant investigative energy to checking out whether there was anything in what Helms was saying. (There often isn't, but

this time, as I say, his case was especially plausible.) *The Wall Street Journal* rightly accused journalists and liberal politicians of a double standard. Ordinarily the slightest hint of C.I.A. skulduggery is enough to incite their ire. This time no one but right-wing nuts seem to care.

So powerful is Helms's ability to tar an issue, at least as far as the press is concerned, that CIA intervention in the election didn't catch on with the press even after the Reagan Administration admitted that \$1 million was pumped to Duarte's Christian Democratic party and \$400,000 to another non-rightist candidate. But a related issue did strike the fancy of the press, namely the alleged, dastardly leaking of classified information about the CIA by Helms the whistleblower. Martin Tolchin of the *New York Times* wrote that Helms "found himself in the center of a controversy among his Senate colleagues . . . as he vehemently denied that he had disclosed information from the Senate intelligence committee." In the *Washington Post*, columnist Mary McGrory scolded the Senate for being

pusillanimous in failing to rebuke Helms publicly, and expressed no dismay about the CIA's role in the Salvadoran election. So much for the enthusiasm of the press for whistle-blowers.

The interesting counterpoint to Helms in press coverage is Senator Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio, who gets along with reporters only slightly better than Helms does and is also not noted for his pragmatism. Metzenbaum's liberalism is not only knee-jerk but unswerving. That is fine, however. So is pragmatic liberalism of, say, the variety practiced by Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware, a Democrat. So is middle-of-the-roadism, which is followed by Senator Dennis DeConcini of Arizona, another Democrat. And so is pragmatic conservatism, which is what seems to motivate Republican Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming. What won't do is unflagging conservatism. How do we know this? Well, compare the press coverage of Helms's 1982 filibuster against the five-cent hike in the gasoline tax with Metzenbaum's filibuster against reducing the windfall profits tax on oil in 1981. Both said they were seeking to protect the little guy, the consumer, the average taxpayer. Helms was pilloried; Metzenbaum wasn't. And in December 1982, a *Washington Post* reporter wrote a paean to Metzenbaum under the headline "Thank God for Metzenbaum." How often have stories like that appeared about Helms, praising him for trying to keep taxes low and cut federal spending? You shouldn't have to ask.

What would get big play, however, is a hint of scandal involving Helms. What if it were revealed that for a bit of work in June 1983 the Senator had picked up a \$250,000 finder's fee? The story would be on the front page of all the major papers and given a loud airing on the TV networks. Well, a revelation exactly as described was made last May about Metzenbaum. He got the \$250,000 for steering a buyer



Fred Barnes is National Political Reporter for the Baltimore Sun.

to a political friend who owned the Hay Adams Hotel in Washington across Lafayette Park from the White House; the hotel was sold within 24 hours after Metzenbaum brought the two together. An account of all this appeared on the back page of the *Wall Street Journal*, but practically nowhere else outside Ohio. The *New York Times* didn't mention the case until Metzenbaum was shamed into returning the money. In the *Journal* piece, it was noted that Senate conflict-of-interest rules instruct employees of the Senate not to "practice a profession for compensation to any extent during regular office hours." Metzenbaum explained that his brief part in the hotel sale occurred on a "Wednesday evening." Imagine the press reaction if Helms were to come forth with an explanation such as that. It wouldn't be just disbelief but hostility.

Helms and Metzenbaum aren't the only two similar fellows—similar in tactics and distance from the political center—who get disparate coverage. What about James Baker and Edwin Meese? Both are senior White House aides, both are conservatives, both are bent on getting President Reagan re-elected in 1984. But Baker gets a terrific press, Meese the opposite. The reason is that Baker is a pragmatic conservative who treats reporters as people with meaningful roles and serious questions; Meese is an ideological conservative who is of little help to reporters. When the Debategate scandal came along, scarcely a negative story about Baker appeared. He had friends in the press to fall back on. But when Meese's nomination for Attorney General got into trouble, unfavorable stories proliferated. He had few press friends to help protect him.

Another intriguing case is that of Alan Simpson and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York. A few years ago, a magazine called the *Washington Monthly* ran a piece on the ten best and ten worst senators. Simpson made the best list, Moynihan the worst, and why this happened isn't hard to understand. Simpson is as well-liked by reporters as anyone in the Senate; he is an extraordinarily witty man, perhaps the funniest guy in Congress next to Congressman Morris Udall of Arizona. That, not his legislative record, catapulted him into the top ten. Moynihan, on the other hand, is difficult for reporters to deal with. He's long-winded and pedantic. Reporters prefer short, punchy answers to their questions. Besides, at the time of the article, he was probably the nation's most well-known neoconservative, a title he has since shed. That couldn't have helped either.

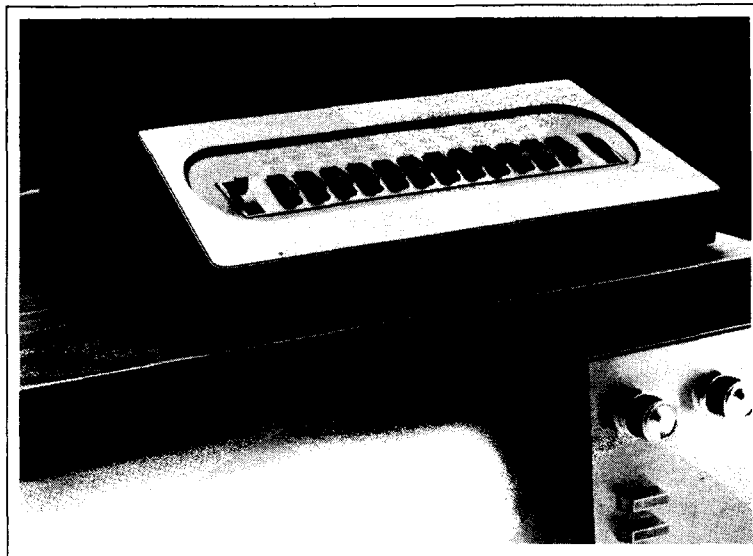
Or what about Senator Robert Dole of Kansas and Congressman Jack Kemp of New York? Dole, along with Senator Pete Domenici of New Mexico, is the Republican party's chief advocate in Congress of raising taxes. Kemp is the chief proponent of reducing taxes. No need to guess who gets the nifty, adoring coverage and who doesn't. Dole is a pragmatic conservative who is usually accessible and

often brimming with pungent comments. Moreover, he talks incessantly about what many reporters have come to believe is the engine of the economy, the deficit. Kemp insists that tax rates and monetary policy are the engines of the economy and that deficits result when taxes are too high and monetary policy wrongheaded. And he's no pragmatist; he's for restoration of a gold standard. Nor is he witty (he is ac-

cessible). Kemp sometimes lectures reporters on economics, too, which they don't like. Dole would never do that.

Whether reporters will give more weight to ideology than amicability (or lack of it) in judging a political figure is frequently uncertain. In one recent case, an ideological conservative's getting-along skills were so impressive, especially in contrast to his liberal op-

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ponent's abysmal lack of them, that he got gentler, less negative coverage. Reporters thought him kooky and ill-informed on some issues, but he wasn't

as unpleasant as his opponent, who had been quoted from time to time as suggesting that reporters were interested mainly in gaffes and in-

cautious statements, not serious matters of government. The suggestion was irrefutably true, but your average reporter didn't see it that way. So it

wasn't surprising that the liberal got tougher treatment by the press. And Jimmy Carter wound up losing the presidency. □

EMINENTOES



ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF HARRY TRUMAN

by Alonzo L. Hamby

Five years ago, Robert H. Ferrell, an eminent diplomatic historian at Indiana University, happened to be in the Kansas City area on business. He made

Alonzo L. Hamby teaches history at Ohio University. He is the author of *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism* and is currently working on a biography of Harry Truman.

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a side visit to the Truman Library in Independence, Mo., hoping to find a few documents on Harry Truman's army service for a book he was preparing on World War I. He discovered that the library had over the past few years acquired and made available Truman's private correspondence and diaries.

This new material—as opposed to the enormous body of formal letters, speech drafts, and public opinion mail that heretofore had made up the “Truman Papers”—was frank and revealing. Part of it, including some lengthy personal musings, was in Truman's own hand; the typewritten material had been handled and jealously guarded by his long-time confidential secretary. All had remained his personal property until his death and the settlement of his estate.

Ferrell found himself captivated by the “good stuff” so long denied

historians. He seized the opportunity to make himself the editor of Harry Truman's own account of his life. Two books followed quickly: the immensely successful *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman*¹ and the less-noticed *The Autobiography of Harry S. Truman*,² a collection of Truman's reminiscences about his life and career.

Four years later, lightning struck again. After the death of Mrs. Truman, the library came into possession of some 1,200 letters from her husband that she had saved over a period of half a century. Ferrell pounced on them like a jungle cat with a sure instinct for his prey. In a matter of months, he produced another successful book, *Dear Bess: The Let-*

¹Harper & Row, 1980.

²Colorado Associated University Press, 1980.

*ters from Harry to Bess Truman, 1950-1959.*³

Along the way, Ferrell also found time to write *Harry S. Truman and the Modern Presidency*,⁴ a slim volume aimed primarily at the college classroom market. Most recently, he has produced *Truman: A Centenary Remembrance*.⁵ A collection of 200 or so photographs displaying every aspect of HST's life, *A Centenary Remembrance* is clearly aimed at the coffee-table set. The accompanying text is thin, apparently hastily written, and most effective when Truman addresses the reader directly via a well-chosen quotation. The pictures are another matter. It is inevitable that in any collection this large, some will be familiar, but the most devoted Truman aficionado is likely to be surprised and delighted by others.

My own favorites included Harry as a 12-year-old looking like Little Lord Fauntleroy; as a tousle-haired bank clerk at 18; as a would-be energy tycoon at 32 standing in front of an oil derrick; as a Captain of Artillery sitting *without his glasses* for his World War I army identity card and thereby seeming somehow more the square-jawed, hard-muscled farmer that he was; as a 42-year-old Lieutenant Colonel sporting a mustache and a field uniform at reserve camp; as a senator in his fifties looking at the business end of what one hopes was an unloaded six-shooter wielded by John Nance Garner; as a sixtyish President on vacation at Key West, stripped to the waist and proudly displaying a big fish that didn't get away; as a wrinkled, shriveled old man in his late eighties posing for the artist Thomas Hart Benton.

³W.W. Norton, \$19.95.

⁴Little, Brown, \$13.50; \$5.95 paper.

⁵Viking, \$25.00.

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Truman and the Modern Presidency in particular serves as a vehicle for Ferrell's high opinion of Truman, whom he considers possibly the greatest President since Lincoln. Few working historians would rate HST quite so high, although the majority still seem to accept the "near-great" evaluation of several scholarly polls and agree that Truman's achievements—preserving the New Deal at home, containing Soviet expansion abroad, establishing the framework of the contemporary presidency—were considerable. Yet one senses that these are not the reason for a national fascination with Truman so strong that three of Ferrell's collections have become Book-of-the-Month properties. Indeed, few ordinary Americans can recite Truman's accomplishments beyond his "decision" to use the atomic bomb at the end of World War II (less difficult and agonizing than is popularly believed).

During the past decade or so, Truman has captured the American imagination less because of what he did than because of a widely held sense that he represented something authentic that is no longer to be found in our national life. It is for this reason that Robert Ferrell's greatest success has been with those works that simply let Old Harry speak for himself. His three edited books contain altogether a thousand pages of undiluted Trumaniana. They provide many readers with reassuring confirmation that America was once led by men who in contrast to today's crop were more virtuous and, above all, utterly lacking in artificiality. But it would be deceptive to leave it at that. What follows are some of the random thoughts of a would-be biographer upon reading the Ferrell corpus.

Harry Truman matured late in life. In 1906 at the age of 22, he was a promising young clerk drawing a salary of \$100 a month—good money in those days—with a major Kansas City bank. His position held plenty of possibilities for advancement, and he enjoyed the relatively cosmopolitan life of the city. He gave all this up at the request of his father for what turned out to be more than a decade of dreary, unrewarding farm work. He even assumed as part of his interest in the farm a portion of his father's debts!

Does one praise him for commendable family loyalty? Or does one assume that he had not developed the inner strength to make his own way in life? The changing tone of his correspondence and his determination to make a career for himself as a businessman once he was out on his

own again seem to demonstrate that his father's death in 1914 was a liberating experience.

When he began his correspondence with "Bessie" on December 31, 1910, he was a 26-year-old man who had allowed his family to make critical decisions for him and had never experienced a steady relationship with a girl. One should beware of making assumptions about an individual's

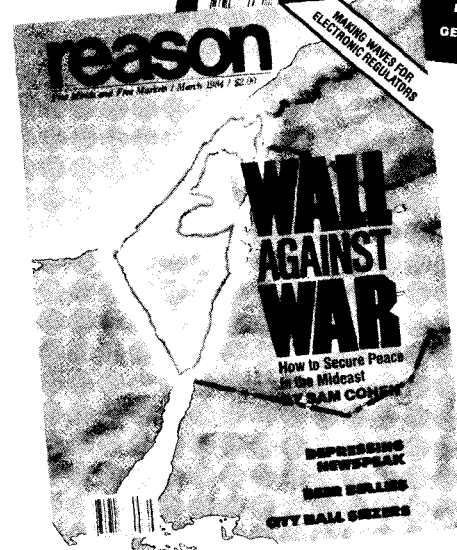
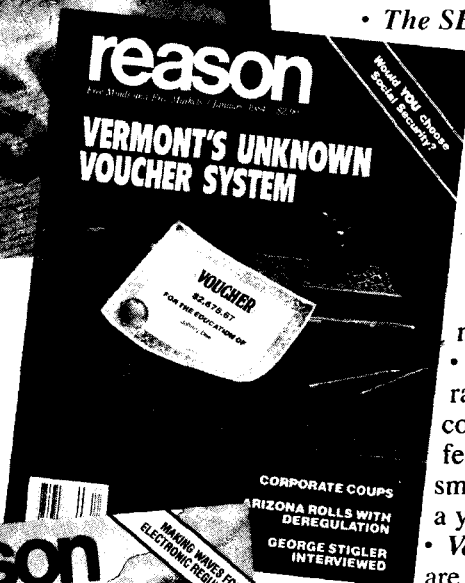
character based on letters to a young lady with whom he is hopelessly smitten. Even with the exercise of extreme caution, however, it is evident that the man who wrote these letters had not passed beyond the emotional stage of a teenager.

Harry's letters to Bess from the beginning of their courtship through their marriage display something that the modern mind finds difficult to

comprehend—a single-minded fixation on one woman that makes Romeo Montague look like a gadabout by comparison. Throughout his correspondence to her and the "diary" entries he wrote to himself, he insists she was the only girl he ever cared for from the age of six on.

Yet she paid little attention to him when they were in school together, and they apparently rarely chanced to meet

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for nine years after their graduation. In 1911, she turned down his first proposal, but he continued with a pursuit made all the more difficult by a farm boy's relative isolation and by his inability to purchase an automobile. (Even in the Victorian Age, didn't most young men give up after a while and shop around elsewhere?)

When Bess agreed to an informal

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engagement in 1913, six long years passed before their wedding, apparently because Harry felt it necessary to achieve success and make money on his own before taking on the responsibilities of wife and family. And after they were married on June 28, 1919, they spent an astonishing amount of time apart from each other. When Harry's career took him to Washington, Bess continued to spend weeks on end in Independence at the old gingerbread mansion her grandfather had built. During the Washington years, they seem to have been separated as often as not on their wedding anniversary, occasionally even at Christmas.

One finds himself concluding that Truman climbed to the pinnacle of American politics despite a remarkable lack of support from his wife at times when he desperately needed it. Yet he remained devoted to her without qualm. Several times he told her he was "a damned, sentimental old fool." He wrote in 1944: "From Sunday school days . . . to World War II you are just the same to me—the nicest prettiest girl in the world. Most of my associates think there's something wrong with me because I believe in that oath I took in a certain little Episcopal church in Independence, Missouri, about twenty-five years ago."

How does a biographer deal with this? Was it simply one of the great love stories of our time? Or does it tell us that, whatever the reason, Harry Truman had a lot of difficulty in dealing with the opposite sex? Without disparaging his genuine love for his wife, we had better give some attention to the other possibility.

He accepted the resignation of Frances Perkins as Secretary of Labor when he became President primarily because he was uncomfortable with the idea of a female Cabinet member. He believed that a common characteristic of great leaders throughout history was their mastery of their "carnal instincts." At the age of 77, he was so embarrassed in admitting an attractive young female stenographer to his New York hotel suite that he left the door open and addressed her as "young fella."

There can be no doubt after reading *Dear Bess* that the young Truman was a rube, perhaps a bit more educated than the typical Missouri farmer but about as provincial and unsophisticated as they come. He and his young lady occasionally attended Shakespearean performances and classical concerts; but most of Harry's letters contain references to hacked-out serials in the popular magazines and to light, long-forgotten musicals.

He was, typically enough for his time and place, a young rural bigot

whose letters abounded with nasty references to bohunks, kikes, and niggers. (Even as an older and wiser man, he could lapse into such language when angry. It is disconcerting to read a second-term senator's reference to Brooklyn sportswriters as "Kike trolley dodgers" or a President's description of heavyweight champion Joe Louis as a "yellow nig," however private and casual his remarks may have been.)

He went off to risk his life in World War I without the slightest understanding of such geopolitical folderol as the mutual Anglo-American interest in control of the Atlantic. An idealistic patriot, he fought because of a sense of American mission and a naive hatred of the Hun: "I do want to be in at the death of this 'Scourge of God.' Just think what he'd do to our great country and our beautiful women if he only could."

An older and considerably more mature Harry Truman—a man who had experienced wartime combat and had achieved success in politics—emerges in the last third or so of *Dear Bess* and dominates *Off the Record*. Between his discharge from the Army at the end of World War I and his swearing-in as President at the end of World War II, Truman had gone through some difficult and complex experiences. His business had failed, leaving debt hanging over him for years. He had undertaken an alliance with a notorious political machine but had managed it in such a way as to preserve his self-respect and his reputation for honesty. (Anyone who doubts his honesty during the Pendergast years need only read the numerous penny-pinching letters he wrote to his wife in the twenties and thirties. It is a pretty sure bet that a man who fretted constantly about the cost of eating out and rented his Washington apartment for periods of a few days was not on the take.)

He remained a simple man in ways that were both attractive and unattractive. He gloried in his provincialism and wanted to be thought of as an ordinary person who exemplified the virtues of American democracy. He hated ostentation and showmanship even to the point of priding himself on his lack of oratorical skill.

The Baptist church, which he joined at the age of 18, gave him an ideal faith, however much he ignored Baptist preachings against alcohol, gambling, and profanity. The Baptists allowed the common man direct access to God; their lines of church authority ran from the bottom up; their worship services were simple and unadorned. "I've never thought that God

gives a damn about pomp and circumstance, gold crowns, jeweled breast plates and ancestral background," Truman characteristically told himself in 1955.

A child of the late nineteenth century, he accepted and attempted to practice its best values unquestioningly. Having received the rudiments of a classical education through his reading of Plutarch and other ancients assigned to bright schoolchildren in the days of his youth, he took up the values of honor and duty as guideposts for his life. In the patriotic tradition of Cincinnatus, one of his great heroes, he went off to war at the age of 34, conducted himself courageously, and believed in the Cincinnatian ideal of the citizen soldier ever after. An intense cultural traditionalist, he hated virtually all the artistic manifestations of modernity, whether in music, art, or architecture; one suspects he instinctively grasped their messages of impersonality and disorder.

Above all, he seemed a textbook example of the inner-directed man who somehow managed to survive and triumph in an other-directed era. He made a virtue of his contempt for public opinion surveys, even as they increasingly became the indispensable tools of more bureaucratic-oriented and manipulative-minded politicians. "I wonder how far Moses would have gone if he'd taken a poll in Egypt? What would Jesus Christ have preached if he'd taken a poll in Israel? Where would the Reformation have gone if Martin Luther had taken a poll? It isn't polls or public opinion of the moment that counts. It is right and wrong and leadership—men with fortitude, honesty and a belief in the right that makes epochs in the history of the world."

Revisionist historians to the contrary, he really believed in every program he advocated—even national health insurance, even civil rights. His personality was incompatible with blatant political cynicism. If he had doubts about an issue, he talked himself into believing in it. Five and a half years after he had left the White House, he took it upon himself to lecture to an Arkansas friend about the need to comply with court-ordered desegregation.

Harry Truman was, of course, not simply a human being of unalloyed virtue. His deficiencies, like his strengths, were those of the common man. Everyone knows he had a terrible temper, but not much attention has been paid to its sources. He always retained within himself a residue of insecurity—about his education, his origins, his commonness. Born to a marginal family in a pseudo-egalitarian

environment where social-economic distinctions actually were felt in practice, if not in theory, a failure in business, an associate of crooked politicians, he developed a touchiness about himself and his own brood that verged on the paranoid.

Truman had an uncanny ability to transform the smallest criticism into a personal insult. He truly believed that the music critics who panned daughter Margaret's singing were indirectly attacking him. Although his family drew hardly a tenth of the attention given the Roosevelts, he felt that they were subjected to a constant barrage of vilification. He possessed, indeed cultivated, a deep-rooted hatred of the press. Relatively open in his contempt for the big publishers, he also harbored an intense distrust of most working reporters and columnists. He never forgot a slight, real or imagined. He never stopped hating his enemies and unnecessarily invented a few. His personal files contain scores of angry unsent letters⁶ that demonstrate a capability for sheer rage un-

healthy in a public leader.

Truman went into retirement as an unpopular, discredited President. But as memories of the controversies with which he was associated faded into the distance, many ordinary Americans found themselves identifying with and admiring him. Half-consciously, they came to realize that he was in magnified form a composite of all of them. During the upheavals of the 1960s, he seemed to them a reassuring link with the past. His traditionalism made him appear more conservative than he really was, and he drew praise from millions of older people who had voted against him in 1948.

The oversize title-page photo of *A Centenary Remembrance* shows us President Harry S. Truman speaking in Los Angeles; seated on the platform behind him listening with rapt atten-

⁶A few of these can be found in *Off the Record*. For a fuller selection, see Monte M. Poen, *Strictly Personal and Confidential: The Unsent Letters of Harry S. Truman* (Little, Brown, \$10.95).

tion is Ronald R. Reagan, second-rank matinee idol, actors' guild activist, liberal Democrat, and Southern California ADA stalwart. One cannot help but wonder how they would react to each other today.

One suspects Truman would sympathize with the direction of Reagan's foreign policy and would find Mondale, Hart, and Jackson more appalling than appealing. But he also most likely would consider Reagan a renegade too close to those he occasionally characterized as "gluttons of privilege." An intensely partisan Democrat, he was incapable of giving enthusiastic support to any Republican. Prone to describe himself as "a little left of center," he was an example of a currently endangered species—a liberal of the Vital Center.

He defined liberalism as a concern for all the people and played the game of interest group politics reluctantly and reservedly. A product of the populist rural Midwest, he distrusted big labor almost as much as big business. He learned early that human nature was mixed and that neither as

politician nor as chief diplomat could he expect to function in an environment of moral purity. He understood that neither his country nor the world could be made perfect; he sought simply to improve them.

Instinctively, he grasped one of the central truths of this century—that the totalitarianism of the Left was as reprehensible as that of the Right. His predecessor had saved Western Europe from Nazi domination; he saved it from Soviet domination.

In the end, the times in which we live determine our evaluations of historical figures. A historian writing in 1963 after eight years of Eisenhower and two of Kennedy probably would have commented condescendingly that the nation and the Democratic party could have done worse than Truman. One who makes his assessment after observing the administration of Jimmy Carter, the current state of the Democratic party, and the failure of what is today called liberalism may wonder if Truman's country or his party will ever again do as well. □

AMONG THE INTELLECTUALOIDS



OLYMPIC ART

by Benjamin J. Stein

Let me tell you about high culture in Los Angeles. This summer, the magnificent city of Los Angeles will host an arts festival to precede and coincide with the Olympic Games. It will be a mass infusion of high culture into the high capital of mass culture. Among the several hundred events will be Shakespearean plays performed in Japanese Kabuki style; a dramatization of the Vietnam war from a local theater company's point of view; a German dance theater that will do an adaptation of *The Rite* (sic) of *Spring*, featuring 400 pounds of dried leaves and a stage planted with live grass; performers who speak and act out their private fantasies; and an exhibition of French Impressionists.

There will be 400 performances in all, ranging from Mozart operas to jazz to musical scores of movies to "performance art." All in all, as the

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promoters say, the event will make Los Angeles the cultural center of the world this summer.

I wish I could find a way to explain just how marginal to Los Angeles life this entire exercise will be, and how silly in the context of Southern California culture, but I do not think I can, any more than I could imagine typing enough words to fill up the black holes in space.

Los Angeles is a wonderful place. As far as I am concerned, it has the kindest, sweetest, most fun-loving people of any place I have ever lived. The weather is perfect, and it is possible for almost anyone to earn a decent living here. In addition, there are many car washes located quite near to where I live.

But none of the glory of the city has to do with high culture. For example, when I first moved here, eight glorious years ago, I often told new acquaint-

ances that I was a writer. Over and over I would get the same response: "Wow, that's really great. You know, I love to read. Of course, I'm too busy to do much of it, but some weekends, I just have to read. So I close the door to the pool house and I just sit there and read the newspaper for a couple of hours. I love to read."

That is no exaggeration. Reading a newspaper here is considered a highly intellectual, almost daringly intellectual act. Reading a novel by someone other than, say, Harold Robbins, is thought of as exotic almost beyond understanding. In fact, here in Los Angeles a novel *means* one of those things you find in little chrome racks

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Patrick Shanahan
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next to the checkout counter at the Safeway. Novels by people like Doris Lessing or Cynthia Ozick or even Philip Roth are something else, maybe literature.

If reading a newspaper is considered an unusually marginal intellectual act, what can one say about Il Teatro Piccole di Milano's performance of *Harlequin: The Servant of Two Masters*? If reading Philip Roth is likened to do-

ing cultural topology, what is the performance by "Cricot 2," an ensemble company from Poland, of *Wielopole*, *Wielopole*, a play which "... explores the hold of the past on the present ..."?

In Los Angeles, entire sections of the population believe that classical music ranges from Carl Perkins to the Beatles. What will they think of a performance of *Peter Grimes* by the

Royal Opera of Covent Garden? Even powerful college graduates who bring entire studios to heel have never heard of Puccini (a competitor of Gucci on Rodeo Drive, perhaps?). Will they care if *Turandot* is brought here or if a flea market is held in the same space?

This is not to say that the people here are philistines. Angelenos will consume culture if it is packaged properly, for they have a modest apprecia-

tion of it for its own sake, to put it mildly. For example, if culture can be packaged in an upscale designer form, such as Gucci belts or Calvin Klein jeans, Angelenos will buy it and display it. If a ballet group with a name star like Alexander Godunov or Baryshnikov passes through town they will flock to see it. That way, they can tell their friends next day that they saw Godunov or Baryshnikov, just as if they had worn a Vuitton bag or a Cacharel blouse. But Angelenos would not care much about seeing a ballet by, say, the Stuttgart Ballet, even though it is a truly great company, because who at the office or at the health club has ever heard of Stuttgart?

You see, Los Angeles is a city of people in a hurry. People come here to make it big in movies or records or real estate or restaurants or tax shelters or gourmet dog biscuits. They expect to do their thing, to achieve their quest, more or less overnight. Since that requires constant motion, they do not have much leisure to sit through the Ninth Symphony and be moved by its majesty. Since making yourself into a household word takes lots of concentration, how much thought can be spared a Manet oil? Since showing the city that you have made it is a major preoccupation, where is the point in sitting amidst a lot of other stiff—~~none of whom has ever been in~~ *People*—listening to a woman in armor scream her lungs out, even if the result is divine operatic glory that can make a listener have a peek at heaven?

Once the people in a hurry have gotten to where they want to be, they learn—as people here always do—that keeping yourself in the marquee lights is an endless struggle, that making sure you're the biggest builder in the Wilshire corridor is a lifetime job, that keeping the studios aware of your genius allows no retirement from the fray. Not only that, but once you have been acclimated to endless movement and effort you become literally addicted to the *action*. You do not even want to stop hustling around, making phone calls, making deals, making a name, making money.

The true spirit of Los Angeles is not about contemplation of artistic creation. It is about getting and spending, pure and simple.

Of course, every city has pockets of guerrillas opposed to the dominant mode of the city, and Los Angeles is no exception. In Santa Monica, in Pasadena, in old portions of Hancock Park, there are people who have either left the fray or never entered it. There are widows, coupon-clippers, perpet-

The Kremlin's Dirty Little Secret

Russia was once known as the "breadbasket of Europe" due to the bountiful harvests of its fertile Ukraine region. Since the Revolution and the collectivization of the farms, however, agricultural output has been notoriously low. This socialist paradise can no longer feed its own people, and must rely heavily on farmers in free nations like the United States to stave off famine.

Not surprising, the Soviet government attributes this dismal performance, not to socialist mismanagement, but to over sixty-five consecutive years of "bad weather." Curiously, there is one sector of Soviet agriculture which has fared well despite bad weather. It is the so-called "private sector."

The private sector consists of one-acre plots of land which farming households are allowed to cultivate in their spare time either for their own consumption or for sale. They are also allowed to have a cow, two pigs, and as many chickens as they want.

In all, these plots account for only about three percent of the total farmland in the Soviet Union. Yet this private sector provides about thirty-three percent of total agricultural output. Specifically, it contributes 65% of that country's potatoes, 40% of its vegetables, 35% of its milk and meat, and 50% of its eggs.

On average, about 44% of the cash and in-kind income of collective farm families is derived from private household plots. This explains why the Kremlin tolerates the private sector. As bad as their agricultural situation is, it would be much worse in the absence of these little oases.

So, despite socialist rhetoric to the contrary, even the Soviet Union must grudgingly concede the amazing productive power of workers left free to make their own choices and to keep or sell what they produce.



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For further information regarding the availability of a full series of these short, informative essays, contact Mr. G. Scot Hasted, Room D, Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, MI 49242.

But these people, while often fine individuals and good friends, are almost

The truth is that while the 400 performances are going on here, the city will be doing what it always does—

spewing out mass culture, building itself ever higher and wider, making itself richer and more arrogant, not slowing down even at four in the morning. The Olympic Arts Festival will be like that opera house that Fitzcarraldo carried up the Amazon to the heart of the Brazilian jungle. It will be a magnificent testimony to human persistence and determination, but it will also be an irrelevant edifice, soon covered over by the vines and tendrils of the city that is too busy to pause and

Again, this is a great city, but it is all about motion, and not at all about contemplation. I personally think this makes us a poorer city, and maybe some day it will change. But for the summer of 1984, the sounds people will be listening to will not be opera or ballet, but the usual sounds of making it in the world center of ambition, sounds of cash registers and auto exhausts and applause and deep sighs. □

(this before the socialists had come to power in Spain). The Greeks refused to agree to a Common Market condemnation of Libya's intervention in Chad, and held up agreement on the participation of Britain, France, Italy, and the Netherlands in the peacekeeping forces for the Sinai. Last, but certainly not least, Greece was the only European country to refuse to condemn the . . . shooting down of the

defenseless KAL 007 by the Soviet air force (again, under governmental prodding, pro-government newspapers accused the Koreans of spying and the United States of provoking the Soviets).

And speaking of Qaddafi, how can anyone take a country like Greece seriously when it has practically mortgaged its future to the Libyan madman. The fact that Qaddafi has failed

to pay hundreds of millions of dollars owed to Greek engineering companies that have fulfilled contracts in Libya does not seem to worry Papandreou. He allows Qaddafi's hitmen to run wild in the Greek capital, and never misses a chance to condemn America and Israel for the world's ills. The last person of diplomatic status to be thrown out of Greece was, yes, you guessed it, an American intelligence of-

ficer investigating the murder of an American diplomat last Christmas. Again one shudders at the thought of thousands of Americans held hostage to Arab mobs during an Olympiad in Greece.

If any further reason is needed to disqualify the birthplace of selective democracy from ever being awarded the Olympic Games it is the propensity of Greek governments to introduce retroactive laws once in power. Time and again Greek politicians have broken the law of the land by either changing the constitution altogether—Karamanlis alone has done it twice in his lifetime—or by ordering the judiciary—which is appointed by the polls—to declare existing laws null and void. Is the West so naive as to believe that the Greeks will not pull an Ayatollet once the Olympic Games belong to Greece forever? If the answer is yes, I suggest we might as well trust the Soviets and disarm unilaterally right now.

Greece has always been a country obsessed by real and imaginary threats to its security, a people divided by the yellowest press in the world and betrayed by the most venal political leadership this side of Palermo. Sadly, it is now a debased culture that can only breed anti-Americanism and anti-Western propaganda as an excuse for its self-inflicted disasters. It has become a polluted, corrupt, and incompetent country that would use the games only to fatten its filthy pockets. The fact that Greeks outside Greece are among the world's most honest, brave, law abiding, and successful people speaks for itself. It is not the Greek character that is at fault. It is the Greek nemesis of bad leadership.

Now if any country deserves the Games permanently, it is Switzerland. The Swiss have managed through their armed neutrality to live up to what is supposed to be the Olympic spirit. They've managed it for 800 years. But I would bet my bottom devalued drachma that the wise Swiss would not accept the games. Only the most naive don't know that the present Olympic spirit involves nothing more than cheating by the Iron Curtain camp for propaganda purposes. I say we don't give yet another platform to the totalitarians of this world to advertise the prowess of their robots. They already have the U.N. After the amateur games of Los Angeles, America should take the lead and call a halt. Let the Soviets and their clients go to Greece if they wish. Civilized people and countries should not take part. Nor should they forget that the original games were halted in 330 B.C. because of . . . corruption. As a wise man said, there comes a time to call a halt. This is it. ☐

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BOOK REVIEWS

In his brilliant book *Before the Fall*, William Safire quotes Henry Kissinger as saying: "I don't need an intelligent, sensitive human being for an assistant. What I need is a good, smart robot." But in practice, of course, good, smart robots are not to be had. Instead, one gets smart humans, not necessarily very sensitive either, but with big ears, wagging tongues, the itch to acquire power for themselves and to take it away from others. Broadly, the theme of General Haig's account of his stewardship as Secretary of State is his political destruction at the hands of President Reagan's assistants, James Baker, Michael Deaver, and Edwin Meese, and their innumerable acolytes and hangers-on. It is a cogent, well-argued, and single-minded book, crisply written and often illuminated by a telling phrase. It stays just this side of bitterness, but it is a book with a grievance, and it is addressed personally (as it were) to Reagan, in the hope that during his second administration he will rectify some of the mistakes Haig identifies in the first.

Haig had the makings of a first-rate Secretary of State. Indeed, at one time he had presidential ambitions, and it is likely he would have made a fine chief executive. Like the best kind of educated soldier, he is highly self-disciplined, with an orderly, systematic mind, and a keen sense of both the possibilities and the limitations of power. On the evidence of *Caveat*, he is by no means diffident in deploying the strength of the United States, but long experience has left him with no illusions about what the use of force actually means. He tells a fine anecdote about the Falklands negotiations, on the occasion when he at last had the chance to meet the full junta. Admiral Anaya, the man primarily responsible for the Falklands invasion, but whose fleet turned ignominiously for home after its first taste of action, boasted about his son, an army helicopter pilot serving in the islands. He asserted: "My son is ready to die for the Malvinas, and it is my family's point of view that we would be proud to know his blood had mingled with this sacred soil." Haig replied: "Let me assure you, Admiral, that you don't know the meaning of war until you see the corpses of young men being put into body bags."

Paul Johnson's most recent book is *Modern Times* (Harper & Row).

CAVEAT: REALISM, REAGAN, AND FOREIGN POLICY

Alexander M. Haig, Jr./Macmillan/\$17.95

Paul Johnson

At the time, Reagan's choice of Haig as his Secretary of State seemed shrewd. He, like Reagan, wished to see a reassertion of American power and influence in the world after the disastrous Carter years, and Haig, unlike Reagan, was immensely experienced and knowledgeable with a nice sense of the unity of geopolitics and the need to have a clear order of priorities in the allocation of effort and resources. But under the American system of presidential government, where power radiates from a single source, personal relationships are all-important. When Haig first took office, Richard Nixon, the wisest of all American professionals, phoned him and "advised me to insist on frequent personal contact with the new President." This was excellent, in fact essential, advice, which Haig was unable to follow.

The truth of the matter is that the American system of conducting foreign policy, with power divided between the White House and the State Department, is unworkable except in three sets of circumstances. The President can conduct his own foreign

policy, as Kennedy tried to do, and Nixon undoubtedly did. The President can wholly delegate the responsibility, as Ford did with Kissinger. Or, occasionally, the President can form a close working relationship with a Secretary he learns to trust and like, as Johnson did with Dean Rusk. Reagan knew Haig scarcely at all when he appointed him. But there was no intrinsic reason why they should not have got on well together and become close colleagues, for Reagan is adept at using strong-minded experts.

But the fact is they didn't. And if the President and the Secretary do not draw closer together, they are certain to drift further apart. Haig places the blame squarely on the presidential staff, and in particular on their determination to exploit the media. He tells us, first, that the lines of demarcation governing responsibility for foreign policy were never formally defined. A draft document, known as NSDDI, was in fact drawn up, but "the President's aides decided that he must not be given the opportunity to sign [it]. . . . The document in its original form was never signed. As a result there was

no description of duty, no rules, no expression of the essential authority of the President to guide his subordinates in their task."

Secondly, Haig believes that the President's assistants, having successfully resisted specific foreign policy guidelines, deliberately undermined his authority in their efforts to manipulate the media. He argues that, after the presidential disasters of the seventies, when a hostile media turned into a blind juggernaut crushing successive administrations beneath its wheels, the Reagan team was determined to master the press and get it to serve their purposes. They could only do this by supplying favored key reporters and editors with confidential government material. Having once got the media hooked and dependent, they could and did obtain favors in return. It was a case of bribery by secrets, and it worked. In no time, as Haig puts it, "the *Times* and the *Post* and the networks and the news magazines had let themselves be converted into White House bulletin boards." The victims were senior government officials outside the White House, a long list headed by himself. If he delivered "a sensitive memorandum for the President's eyes only in the early afternoon," he was likely to "hear line-by-line quotations from it on the evening news." Leaks had been a problem in the Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter Administrations, but under Reagan "they were not merely a problem, they were a way of life, and in the end I concluded that they were a way of governing. Leaks constituted policy; they were the authentic voice of the government." Eventually, Haig found government by leak too much, reflecting as it did irreconcilable conflicts of policy and insoluble demarcation disputes. So he resigned, or was fired. The point is unclear, but it is characteristic that the White House staff got the President to announce Haig's departure to the press while Haig was still drafting his letter of resignation.

Most of Haig's grievances are undoubtedly genuine. But there is, too, an element of paranoia. Haig is an impatient man, with a short fuse and a sensitive skin. He seems to have read too many newspapers and watched too many TV newscasts. Many of the "betrayals" by the White House staff were of no consequence and would



have been quickly forgotten had not Haig chosen to raise them into issues of principle. What is more, some of the most damaging leaks—because they were plainly unmalicious—came from Haig's own staff. It is curious to me that Haig, almost as experienced in government as in military matters, does not put his finger on what is a primary cause of the confusions of American foreign policy: the sheer numbers of people who participate in its formation.

Foreign policy is best conducted by a small group of very well-informed people. Or even alone. One is tempted to recall the methods of Lord Palmerston, perhaps the most consistently successful foreign minister in history. Sir George Shee, one of the under-secretaries, wrote to a colleague in 1832: "Lord Palmerston, you know, never consults an Under-Secretary. He merely sends out questions to be answered or papers to be copied when he is here in the evenings, and our only business is to obtain from the clerks the information that is wanted." More than a century later, Winston Churchill's methods were not much different. He seems to have conceived his famous "percentage deal" with Stalin, which settled spheres of influence in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean in October 1944, entirely by himself. Two months later he decided to cash in Britain's part of the deal and use the army to save Greece from the Communists—a move which gave the Mediterranean to the West for an entire genera-

tion. He dismissed all the Foreign Office drafts with contempt, packed Anthony Eden (the Foreign Secretary) off to bed, and then, according to an eyewitness, settled down all night to issue his instructions to the British generals and diplomats, "sitting gyrating in his armchair and dictating on the machine to Miss Layton, who did not bat an eyelid at the many blasphemies with which the old man interspersed his official phrases."

There have always been some confusions in American foreign policy, but they have been greatly magnified in recent decades by the gigantism of central government, both at the White House and in the Secretariat of State. The expansion of the President's entourage came first. Lincoln had to pay for a secretary out of his own pocket. Hoover had difficulty persuading Congress to provide money for a third. Franklin Roosevelt got the first six "administrative assistants," on advice received, I regret to say, from Stanley Baldwin's *éminence grise*, Tom Jones. By Lyndon Johnson's day, the staff in the White House and the Executive Building had jumped to 1,600, some forty times the size of Hoover's. There was another jump under Richard Nixon, who had 48 administrative assistants and 5,395 people in his executive office staff. A growing number of these people wanted and got a finger in foreign policy, always the most glamorous aspect of government activity.

Kissinger spread the disease of gigantism to the State Department when he moved there. His entourage was Babylonian, and designedly so, for he believed both in the prestige and the sheer weight of numbers, moving around the world in quasi-presidential state. Haig first came to prominence as a colonel on Kissinger's staff, when Kissinger was still Nixon's security assistant. He caught the disease too. When he, in turn, became Secretary of State, he surrounded himself with large numbers of assistants and advisers. I am sure he is right in claiming that the systematic and deliberate leakings which militated against his interests came from the Reagan crew. But he himself was not above shooting off his mouth at private sessions with his team, even allowing them to take notes at the time. Why then should he be surprised and shocked to read it all in the

Washington Post? It may be a necessary part of the Washington power game, under the Kissinger rules, for the Secretary of State to have a court. But courtiers are notoriously idle people, and officials with not enough to do will always intrigue and leak. What is not said or written cannot be leaked.

So, while General Haig has written a valuable book, full of pith and not without some fine lapidary observations, it seems to me he has not quite hit the nail on the head. High policy is not a matter of collegiate endeavor. It certainly should not be shaped by seminar. It should be settled by the few men, the President included, who carry the actual constitutional authority, and who have a mutual interest in keeping their discussions private. That, it seems to me, is the real lesson for Mr. Reagan to learn. □

CIVIL RIGHTS: RHETORIC OR REALITY?

Thomas Sowell/William Morrow/\$11.95

Terry Eastland

Thomas Sowell notes in the preface that *Civil Rights: Rhetoric or Reality?* was written not for pleasure but from necessity. "Something," he writes, "needs to be said." Thirty years have passed since the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, and twenty since enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and yet the races increasingly are polarized, the plight of the truly disadvantaged worsens, and the evolution of civil rights, especially through the courts, is embittering the nation. These trends have focused Sowell's mind and determined that he write this book—a book about "what has been done, and is being done," in the name of civil rights.

What Sowell says in the space of these 140 pages—six chapters and an epilogue—needs to be said, and not only because this is an anniversary year for civil rights. Sowell is an economist who writes well, understands law and the courts, knows history and social science, and, not least of all, cares about his country and its future. His unique combination of talents has produced a unique book, a work of informed and deeply felt argument about

a subject that is one of the nation's most important, yet most confused.

Originally—which is to say at the time of *Brown*—civil rights meant treating individuals without regard to race. It is generally recognized that the meaning of the term has changed greatly since *Brown*, to require treatment on the basis of race and other irrelevant characteristics, and Sowell demonstrates how this change has occurred, briefly reviewing the court cases that led to Supreme Court approval of busing in 1971, and the administrative actions that ushered in government-imposed quotas and "goals" in employment. Not so widely understood is what Sowell also shows: that *Brown* itself augured this shift in meaning.

Brown, as Sowell writes, was "a political masterpiece," a decision that repudiated Supreme Court precedent and Southern custom without appearing to point an accusatory finger. Yet the cost of such a masterpiece can be measured in the Court's failure to articulate a principled justification for its decision, and in its use instead of social science—the findings of so-called "modern authority."

According to the Court, the wrong

Terry Eastland is co-author of *Counting by Race: Equality from the Founding Fathers to Bakke and Weber*.

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of segregation by race lay in its effects upon those segregated—effects that the modern authorities cited by the Court said were harmful. *Brown* concerned segregation by law. But as Sowell points out, it follows that if segregation is in itself harmful, the reason for the segregation doesn't matter. Segregation of any kind—by law or by circumstance—will have deleterious psychological and educational effects on those segregated.

This was the implicit teaching of *Brown*, and it was a seed that later sprouted into the belief that segregation must be remedied by integration—that anything short of a substantial degree of “racial balance” in the schools would harm the hearts and minds of minority school children. And so, to achieve this balance, school districts eventually were directed by federal courts to bus their pupils.

Sowell plainly believes that busing is a failed policy, although here he only touches on its effects. It is enough for Sowell to introduce facts showing that schools attended mainly (if not exclusively) by youngsters of particular racial groups are not “inherently unequal.” This is by no means to suggest that Sowell endorses segregation; in fact, he makes a better case against segregation than the Court did in 1954: “It is both wrong and socially dangerous for the state to classify people by race for different treatment.” Sowell's point is simply that slippery social science should not be the basis for such school desegregation policies as were implicit in the *Brown* decision. It is worth recalling, as Sowell does in *Civil Rights*, that one of the NAACP lawyers in *Brown* referred to the theories of the Court's famous “modern authority” this way: “I may have used the word ‘crap.’ ”

Sowell contends that *Brown*'s reliance on social science was not incidental. He argues that the implicit assumption of *Brown*—that black schoolchildren have equal education opportunities only when they attend integrated schools—reflected a “civil rights vision,” a vision based on moral considerations but also on social science. This vision was only developing at the time of *Brown*, and it was first applied only to blacks. But by the early seventies it was quite fully grown, and gradually it has been made to apply to many racial and ethnic groups, and also to women—roughly 70 percent of the population is included in it, by one count.

In this vision, as Sowell elaborates it, statistical disparities among groups in terms of income, occupation, education, and so forth result from invidious discrimination. Take away the sins of discrimination, and all groups would be achieving on more or less equal

terms. According to this vision, politics becomes all-important, because it is only through political action that moral accounts can be settled, and equal results—and the socioeconomic advancement they suggest—can finally be secured.

This is a fair enough description of the vision held by many of those who today act in the name of civil rights. Readers of Sowell's previous books—such as *Knowledge and Decisions*, *Ethnic America*, *Markets and Minorities*, and last year's *The Economics and Politics of Race: An International Perspective*—will be familiar with what Sowell thinks of this vision. The general arguments of *Civil Rights: Rhetoric or Reality?* are in large part based on the findings presented in those books.

Here is where Sowell comes out: Statistical disparities are commonplace among human beings. They are not the result simply of discrimination, nor does discrimination necessarily lead to poverty. Furthermore, it is not true that in the absence of discrimination all groups would be achieving equally. One cannot simply “go from innate ability to observed result without major concern for intervening cultural factors.”

According to Sowell, there are many reasons for the relative positions of racial and ethnic groups, among them age, location, immigration, and cultural habits, in addition to discrimination. It is perhaps important to stress that Sowell does not deny that discrimination may be one of these factors. Sowell's opponents, as Sowell notes in his epilogue, have a history of creating straw men rather than dealing with Sowell himself. Sowell simply refuses to assign exclusive, or even primary, importance to racial discrimination in explaining the relative socioeconomic position of a particular racial group.

His refusal to do so, and his insistence on considering the many other factors associated with group outcomes, has practical implications. The picture of racial and ethnic groups he ultimately presents is far more complicated than that drawn by many who work in the name of civil rights. For Sowell, advancement does not lie principally through politics but elsewhere—through the marketplace.

Sowell prefers relatively freer markets, and thus policies toward that end—repeal of minimum wage laws, and also deregulation, for example. But *Civil Rights: Rhetoric or Reality?* is not a book of economic policy argument, although it is in part about

Morrow, \$15.95.

economics. “What is lacking in many discussions of discrimination,” he writes, “is a sense of economics.”

Sowell, of course, demonstrates such a sense, on almost every page he writes. He points out, for example, facts that cut against the conventional wisdom: such as that the economic rise of minorities preceded by many years passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; that this trend was not accelerated either by that legislation or by the quotas introduced during the seventies; and that during the current “quota era” disadvantaged blacks with little experience or education have actually retrogressed relative to whites of similar description, while more “advantaged” blacks have risen both in absolute and relative terms, in comparison with their white counterparts.

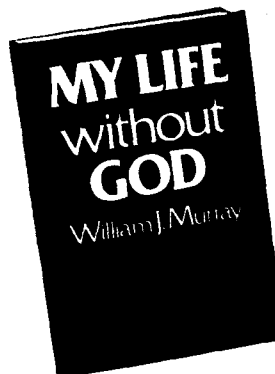
Facts such as these may suggest to some readers that Sowell thinks civil rights irrelevant. Is he so concerned with the long run of history that he forgets to look at the shorter term of

a generation, where surely it makes a difference whether one is forced to endure wrongful discrimination or not? One is tempted to want to remind Sowell, in Lincoln's language, that to discriminate on the basis of race is to “blow out the moral lights around us.”

Yet, here again, as with *Brown*, it is important to understand Sowell in the entirety of what he says. And civil rights, he says, are one of our “most honored achievements.” They “are important in and of themselves”—meaning they have their own justification, apart from contingent propositions. Sowell's point is that civil rights are “not ingredients from which to expect great economic or educational changes in accordance with particular social theories.” And on this, surely Sowell is right. Much more than civil rights are needed for such changes to occur. There is also that problem of the “social theories”: Not every racial and ethnic group will be “equally

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represented" in every endeavor.

With the battle for civil rights "won," Sowell believes it is counter-productive to make every issue affecting minorities into a civil rights matter, where inevitably one's good faith is called into question, and racism is charged, if one is unlucky enough to be on the "wrong" side of an issue. It is Sowell's conviction that realities such as the ones he has elaborated in this and his other books should cause civil rights activists to reconsider their rhetoric and the kind of policies they advocate.

Unlike his other books, *Civil Rights* has a personal, at times angry edge. Sowell is not only upset by the "politicization of race," the "lies and deceptions" associated with race-preferential policies, and "the lofty contempt of a remote and insulated elite [judges, bureaucrats, civil rights activists, and members of the media] from the mass of citizens." He has also been on the receiving end of personal attacks from members of this elite (the epilogue—"The Degeneration of a Controversy"—is Sowell's response to his critics). Sowell is pessimistic about the present course of civil rights, even despairing.

Yet there are, I believe, some reasons for optimism. The meaning of civil rights is more and more debated, not just in magazines and books but also in corridors of federal power (e.g., the Civil Rights Commission) where, previously, race-preferential policies were seldom questioned. Should civil rights mean no distinctions on the basis of race, as Sowell reminds us the idea originally meant, or should it mean the use of race "to get beyond racism"? To have the fundamental meaning of civil rights finally addressed in Washington is a necessary step toward a satisfactory answer.

Meanwhile, there is a growing awareness among minority intellectuals that not every issue facing minorities can be explained by discrimination and thus reduced to a matter of civil rights, or resolved by government action. The spring issue of the *Wilson Quarterly*, for example, contains essays by William Julius Wilson, the Chicago sociologist, and Gary Puckrein, a young historian at Rutgers, that tend to focus attention on factors other than discrimination in understanding the socioeconomic situation of blacks. Puckrein writes frankly that many of the problems facing blacks today—the growing number of female-headed households, teenage pregnancy, high black youth crime rates, drug abuse—cannot be "addressed by federal regulation or resolved by the tactics employed during the civil-rights era."

The nation is still a long way from where it should be on civil rights. The "civil rights vision" will continue to have a hold on many. No doubt there will continue to be those who say such remarkable things as Joseph Rauh, the veteran civil rights lawyer, did last year: "Cuts in food stamps [are] a civil rights issue. Food stamps are a form of recompense for past discrimination against minorities . . . whose parents didn't get enough to eat." And no doubt there will continue to be pressures brought and things done in the name of civil rights in matters that have no busi-

ness being called civil rights issues.

But we may well be moving toward a recovery of the proper meaning of civil rights and their vigilant, colorblind protection, and toward a more realistic understanding of the complicated landscape of racial and ethnic progress, and the limits of government action to effect it. Should this happen, one man we will have to thank—whether some want to or not—will be Thomas Sowell. For more than a decade now he has had the courage to ask many of the right questions, and to follow the evidence wherever it has led. □

PRESIDENTIAL ECONOMICS:
THE MAKING OF ECONOMIC POLICY FROM
ROOSEVELT TO REAGAN AND BEYOND
Herbert Stein/Simon and Schuster/\$16.95

Stephen Chapman

Despite a long career as one of the nation's most prominent conservative economists, Herbert Stein is best known today as an opponent of the economic policies of the most conservative President since Calvin Coolidge. That perception is Stein's fault, but it isn't entirely fair. Though he has often been highly critical of Ronald Reagan, he has not gone over to the enemy camp. When he turns his attention to more worthy targets, as in a recent attack on Walter Mondale in the *New York Times*, he makes a persuasive *de facto* case for re-electing Reagan. Still, it's hard to escape the conclusion that his greatest pleasure is deriding supply-siders.

That is one of the reasons *Presidential Economics* comes as a surprise. Whatever its flaws, it is not a tract against Arthur Laffer. Stein does spend a lot of space quarreling, implicitly or explicitly, with supply-side theories. But his book is at once less polemical and more ambitious than that. He traces, in a temperate and generally fair manner, through the economic policies of the last nine Presidents, explaining where they went right as well as wrong. This is a worthy project, but one fraught with hazards. The worst is tedium. This book calls to mind one of Jane Austen's characters who hated reading history: "It tells me nothing that does not vex or weary me . . . the men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all." Stein writes about

economics with considerably more clarity than most economists, which makes his book accessible to any interested layman. But it is a resolute layman who will slog through it all. Only true aficionados will remain alert through long sections on such matters as the arcana of budget projections. A polemic, however wrongheaded, would hold the reader's attention better than a history.

Stein deserves credit for his nutritious approach. But his book has defects as a historical survey too, chiefly its idiosyncratic emphases. The six years of the Nixon presidency get twice as much space as the 16 years of Hoover and Roosevelt, which can be justified only by Stein's service under Nixon, as chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. Ford and Carter get a scant 26 pages, with no mention of such ventures as Carter's asinine proposal for a \$50 income tax rebate, his fruitless jawboning of inflation, or his admirable deregulatory measures. Reagan, by contrast, gets 71 pages. But these flaws shouldn't overshadow the book's many virtues—lucidity, adequate thoroughness, and somewhat more humility than one is used to from economists. Any reader who wants a compact overview of the important economic events of the last half-century, according to the consensus interpretation of mainstream economics, will find it here.

Some of the author's recollections of his government service are illuminating. The best is his examination

of how Richard Nixon, an avowed opponent of expanding government involvement in the economy, could succumb to the most draconian wage and price controls in American peacetime history, besides presiding over a rapid increase in federal spending. Of the latter, Stein says that Nixon had little interest in economics and "did not come into office with great zeal to reduce either the expenditure or the revenue side of the budget. He did not think that the country was suffering from excesses on either side." The controls were more complicated. Nixon was "allergic to unemployment" and thus reluctant to fight inflation with tight money. In any case, he had little support from the public or in a Democratic-controlled Congress to do so. Perhaps more important, he was "impatient with the dull, pedestrian and painful economics of conventional conservatism. He called that the economics of three yards and a cloud of dust, whereas he yearned for the long bomb." His infatuation with John Connally, who became Treasury Secretary in 1970 and who was for any policy as long as it was bold and dramatic, made controls almost inevitable.

Other insidious influences were at work, and not only on Nixon. Intentionally or not, Stein's account of the imposition of controls casts the author in an unflattering light. The meeting at Camp David from August 13 to 15 of 1971, he says, was "one of the most exciting and dramatic events in the history of economic policy." It was exciting because of the important decisions made, the small number of people involved, and the secrecy of it all. Stein regrets the controls—the "great sin"—but waxes nostalgic about the "exhilaration" felt by everyone who participated in the decision. "Ideologically you should fall on your sword," his son told him, "but existentially it's great." Obviously the lure of power can corrupt even those who distrust it.

Stein's criticisms of supply-side economics are less stimulating. When he is merely thrashing Arthur Laffer and Jude Wanniski—fat though hardly worthy targets—he is on solid enough ground. But he tends to concentrate on them while shrewdly ignoring more persuasive and accomplished economic thinkers who have also stressed the importance of restoring incentives to work and investment. He exaggerates the hope in the Reagan Administration that tax cuts would raise revenues. As Paul Craig Roberts makes clear in his recent book, *The Supply-Side Revolution*, the forecasts of a balanced budget by 1984 were

ased not on Lafferite fantasies but on pending cuts that, it turned out, couldn't be won from Congress. Stein also downplays the importance of the drastic decline in inflation as a source of the swollen deficit. But even he wouldn't argue that the economy would be better off with a budget balanced by a continuation of high inflation.

His debunking of the likely effects of reductions in high marginal tax rates also misses the mark. Someone earning \$120,000 a year who gets a 30 percent cut in his marginal rate, Stein figures, would have to work 28.6 percent more hours to prevent revenues from dropping, which is plainly beyond possibility. This is more than a little disingenuous. In fact, this taxpayer only needs to work a little more, while spending considerably less time and money in search of ways to avoid taxes, which his tax cut makes less valuable. From Stein's analysis, the reader would never get a clue how Reagan's tax cuts would, as it turned out, actually raise receipts in the upper brackets, rather than reducing them as expected. If Stein is acquainted with recent scholarship on the effects of taxes on work, he doesn't betray it. He doesn't mention, for example, the work of MIT's Jerry Hausman, who estimated in 1980 that a 30 percent tax cut would increase the work effort of primary workers (which usually means husbands) by some five percent and of secondary workers (usually wives) by nine percent. Those figures don't validate the Laffer curve, but they are nonetheless impressive. More startling still is Hausman's estimate that, at the margin, each dollar of income taxes collected costs the economy forty cents in "dead-weight loss"—the total loss from exchanges that are not made because of taxes. Stein also pays little heed to the growing number of economists who believe that deficits have much less impact on the economy than total spending, however financed.

In the end, though, Stein concedes much of the case made by intelligent supply-side economists—the importance of stable monetary policy, the obsolescence of the Phillips curve, the futility of "industrial policy," and—yes—the serious harm done by high marginal tax rates in the upper brackets. Unfortunately he is transfixed by the belief that the nation is undertaxed, particularly for its military needs, and by the worry that the deficit will impair growth. But Stein doesn't try to justify the various military commitments that make the Reagan defense budget necessary, or to answer

his professional colleagues who argue that spending, not debt, is the obstacle to economic vitality. Instead he wastes space boring the reader with exhortations to "decision-makers" to "carry on a responsible discussion" toward a "useful consensus." At times like this he sounds like Felix Rohatyn. In fact,

he is smarter, and more attuned to the ingredients of sound economic policy. No doubt that is why, while trying to put great distance between himself and sensible supply-siders, he ends up not so far away. Herb Stein is no supply-sider, but he may not be past redemption. □

THE APOCALYPTICS: POLITICS, SCIENCE, AND THE BIG CANCER LIE Edith Efron/Simon and Schuster/\$19.95

Harry Schwartz

An anecdote popular in Moscow at the height of the Stalin terror told of a man who came out on the street at 6 a.m. and was astonished to find a friend, all his few belongings in a pack on his back, walking rapidly toward the city's boundary. When asked what he was doing, the friend replied, "Don't you know? An order has been issued that all camels must leave town by noon or else face summary execution." The astonished man remonstrated, "That has nothing to do with you. You're not a camel." The reply came immediately, "Yes, but I can't prove I'm not, and neither can you."

The anecdote comes to mind reading Edith Efron's *The Apocalypitics* because it neatly summarizes the plight of every new chemical synthesized in this country since about 1970. A variety of legislation and bureaucratic regulations administered by agencies such as the FDA, EPA, OSHA, and others has in effect assumed that every chemical is born guilty of being harmful, probably carcinogenic, unless proved otherwise. And as a practical matter it is impossible to prove that any chemical will never cause cancer in some human being under some circumstances.

This legislation and much of the accompanying public hysteria about the dangers of modern industrial society, its chemicals, and its pollutants, Miss Efron shows convincingly, were largely overkill. In a fantastic feat of scholarship, she unveils what she considers—with more than a little reason—the biggest scandal American science has ever known. The brainwashing of the public and Congress, she shows, was accomplished with very shoddy and

Harry Schwartz was a member of the New York Times Editorial Board for almost 30 years and is Writer-in-Residence at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University.

often misrepresented scientific evidence. This "evidence" was often exaggerated beyond its true significance by demagogic politicians and by journalists who proved patsies for scientists motivated often by the conviction that industrial capitalism was going to produce a needless epidemic of cancer deaths. To my dismay she shows that much of this trend began with one of my favorite writers, the late Rachel Carson, who, in *Silent Spring*, unjustly and inaccurately sold the idea that nature is benign and only man-made chemicals are the enemy.

Miss Efron does two things superbly well. She demonstrates that nature is not benign and that daily we are bathed in natural, potentially carcinogenic radiation and imbibe with our normal food and drink potential carcinogens which were there in the first place, not added by some greedy industrialist.

Secondly, with scrupulous scholarship, she exposes the scaremongering that led high officials to frighten the American people with the idea that there were tens of thousands, even millions, of potentially carcinogenic chemicals being spewed out by our satanic factories and inflicted upon a helpless and unknowing populace.

The shoddy scholarship that produced the evidence for the mass brainwashing usually took this form: Some substance was fed to a rat or a mouse or some other experimental animal in huge quantities far beyond any reasonable human consumption equivalents. Then, even if the feeding and general care of these animals had been slovenly and even criminally careless, if some fraction of these animals seemed to develop a higher than expected number of tumors, the substance immediately became suspect as a potential human carcinogen, with the word potential too often omitted. Then, the most influential school of

thought held, there was no threshold effect, no minimum amount below which the substance could not cause cancer. Simultaneously, it became accepted dogma that the mere fact that an experiment had not shown a substance to be carcinogenic in some animal species could not be taken as conclusive evidence of its safety since some other test in a different experimental animal might give the reverse result.

In short, the dominant school of what Miss Efron calls "regulatory science"—to distinguish it from real science—came dangerously close to assuming there could be no proven non-carcinogens, just as the Muscovite of our anecdote argued there could be no proven non-camels. The findings of this pseudo-science were sold to the American people with results that are still powerful as evidenced not only by existing law but also by the widespread hysteria about Love Canal, dioxin, and whatever chemical dump from 50 years ago is found in any normal American community these days. The decision last May by the chemical companies involved to settle the massive Agent Orange case rather than fight it out in court reflects a probably realistic estimate of how little chance scientific truth has in a lay forum these days.

Carried to its logical extreme, this alleged "prudence" against cancer risks sought to ban from the environment everything that might possibly cause cancer. If fully successful, this campaign—which brought large numbers of chemicals under suspicion—could easily have crippled American industry and caused numerous essential substances to be declared illegal. Fortunately, the public developed some cynicism and revolted against the idea that everything one liked caused cancer. This cynicism was best illustrated by the successful pressure on Congress to preserve our right to use saccharin though that substance had been "proved" carcinogenic by all the canons of regulatory science. Moreover, there has been enough scientific debate and enough expensive industrial opposition in the courts and enough confusion in the laws actually passed by Congress so that the practical results of the legislation were far less than the proponents had hoped or the opponents had feared.

Miss Efron approvingly cites a leading regulatory scientist in EPA who wrote in early 1983 that the public debate about the Reagan Administration's environmental policy missed the point. As paraphrased by Miss Efron, "he pointed out that the issue was not whether the administration was more or less conser-

To be reviewed next month by Thomas Hazlett.

vative in its approach to cancer prevention, but that there had never been a government cancer policy which had actually functioned. . . . The essential problem . . . was the 'hodgepodge of laws' produced by a succession of Congresses each of which had different theories about how to deal with carcinogens . . . thus the strangely small number of carcinogens which had ever been regulated."

This points up a serious weakness of this book. Miss Efron's devotion to explaining the scientific debate with which she is concerned is enormous, and nobody can accuse her of hiding the arguments of those with whom she disagrees. She has performed a major intellectual *tour de force*. But she never really explains what was happening in the real world while the debate she chronicles was going on. There is little reference to the bitter battles fought in courts and before regulatory bodies and to the manifold ways by which American industry, in most cases, helped avoid the worst possibilities that could have flowed from the doctrines and legislation she deals with. She does not even mention the case of saccharin.

Those persuaded by Miss Efron's evidence will conclude we have been saved by probably undeserved good luck. But what is worrisome is that the press failed so abysmally to present an accurate picture of the flim-flam that was being sold the American people. Moreover, by the author's own testimony, a number of outstanding authorities in this field agree with her conclusions but are so terrified of the consequences of saying so publicly that they have requested anonymity for their support. Presumably, their fear arises because the "regulatory scientists" hand out research grants and thus have a convenient means of punishing offenders against the party line. No one can read *The Apocalyp-tics* and ever again have the childish notion that American science is a machine devoted solely to pumping out truth for the public good. In this case it turned out to be a machine dedicated in large—but not exclusive—part to justifying the political and cultural presuppositions of some influential scientists and their political allies.

In a surprising section at the very end of this book, Miss Efron seeks to exculpate the media for their role in promoting this charade. The reporters were just repeating what their sources told them and they hadn't had the chance Miss Efron had to spend years studying the documentary record, she argues. But the American media make a religion of skepticism, of trying to show up all sources of authority in the

White House, Congress, and corporate suites, to say nothing of the medical, legal, accounting, and other professions.

No, in a curious way the failure of the media to penetrate the deception practiced upon us all is the central question raised by Miss Efron's important book. It is the basic assumption of a free press that in an unfettered marketplace of ideas where all may speak and be heard, good ideas will drive out the bad and the public weal will be served. This clearly did not happen in this case, and this reviewer, for one, wonders whether Miss Efron's book will get the exposure and debate it deserves.

Read it. You'll like it. Even more important, you'll learn a great deal

that will be important and useful to you.

And ponder how it was possible for the fable of a terrible cancer epidemic ahead to be sold the American people precisely in a period when all the relevant government data showed that the American people as a whole were getting healthier each year and living longer on the average than ever before. But ponder too the question of the responsibility of American industry in all this, responsibility arising from the careless way it used to dispose of its wastes and the disgraceful conditions under which many workers labored only two or three decades ago when they were handling asbestos and chemicals that were at least potentially harmful. □

IN THE PATH OF GOD:
ISLAM AND POLITICAL POWER
Daniel Pipes/Basic Books/\$22.50

Martin Kramer

Islam no longer strikes blind fear in the world. The more violent acts of fanaticism, from Sadat's assassination to Shiite self-detonations, still shock. But radical Islam seems to have stalled alongside its Iranian standard-bearers in the forbidding bogs of southern Iraq. After an inspired counteroffensive, Iran's beturbanned military minds seem to have dispensed with the science of war altogether; so intent are they upon praising the Lord that they have often neglected to pass the ammunition. And what is religious fervor without elementary logistics?

So while Iran's juggernaut to Jerusalem inches through an Iraqi swamp, there is time to ponder the fortunes of Islam these last five years. There has been no further Islamic revolution; some Islamic terrorism, and a lot of Islamic verbiage since the West first began to wring its hands over resurgent Islam. A vast Western literature of explication also has accumulated, leaving not a single mad mullah whose scribbles and table talk have not been pored over by analysts. Mercifully, the early apprehension about a tidal wave of revolution has given way to a subtler appreciation of the assorted men and

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movements that claim to champion true Islam. *In the Path of God* is just such an appreciation, distinguished by the further merits of readability and comprehensiveness. Daniel Pipes has searched the depths of specialist writing on behalf of the general reader, to produce a reliable guide for the perplexed.

And a guide is needed. To follow the debate within Islam is an exacting task, for the discourse is conducted largely in symbolic language. When Khomeini reviles America as the "great Satan," the sense is clear enough, but most of his imagery is specifically Islamic, and even narrowly Shiite. Qaddafi's utterances on Islam are far beyond the comprehension of all but a few diligent mortals. Those with less fortitude understandably cannot fathom how these ideas can survive in the harsh climate of modern skepticism. The difficulty, then, is to interpret Muslim views for those unfamiliar with the idiom of Islam without losing the evocative power of the original symbolism. This Pipes has done. He has resisted a widespread tendency to translate Muslim self-expression into social science jargon as unintelligible as any mosque harangue. His unadorned interpretation strikes a judicious balance between faithfulness to sources and clarity of presentation.

Observes Pipes: "It may be difficult to imagine in the late twentieth cen-

tury, but Islamdom long predominated over its rivals in power, in wealth, and in culture." The present predicament has its origins in Muslim recollections of lost grandeur, to which Pipes devotes the first part of his book. Past preeminence bred a Muslim pride in military self-sufficiency and a justified cultural conceit. There was little to be learned from unbelievers, who were held in contempt for their ignorance of obvious theological truths (as well as their repelling uncleanness). Then, with the precipitous rise of the West, descended what Pipes calls Islam's "nightmare": "Once active, Islamdom became reactive; once a leader, it became a follower; once an integrated civilization, it became ruptured. Military defeat and cultural subjugation resulted in the collapse of the old Muslim complacency and a massive crisis." Pipes frequently invites us to empathize with Muslim grief over the loss of world primacy, and he does so without indulging in Toynbeeian self-flagellation over the West's alleged responsibility for the disarray of Islam. "Premodern Muslims were uniquely insular, able to ignore the innovations, ways, and beliefs of unbelievers," and their heirs paid dearly for an arrogance that lasted too long.

Those burdened by this legacy have wavered between accommodation and resistance. While the West reigned supreme and confident, Muslim Westernizers could make a compelling case for dismantling much of the old order, and importing ideas and institutions. Their methods were often heavy-handed, and opposition was driven into the mosques or underground. But as the tide of Western hegemony ebbed, and Muslim cash flow improved, the fundamentalists grew bold again. Pipes provides a catalogue of the challenges which they have posed, in a chapter consisting of some fifty country-sketches. Although the impact of the resurgence has been uneven in these very different settings, the net effect has been to sanctify resentment of the West.

This has meant that the fundamentalists have spent a lot of energy tilting at windmills. After all, the West has withdrawn from most of its forward positions in Muslim lands, and all but a few Muslim peoples exercise their right to self-government or misgovernment. Intervention has been ineffective, and acts of provocation such as the Iranian hostage episode and the Beirut bombings have demonstrated the West's vulnerability. Nonetheless, a belief in the malicious omnipotence of the West remains a widespread affliction in the abode of Islam. Consider that when the Great Mosque in Mecca—unmolested by foreigners even during imperialism's heyday—was

seized by a group of Muslim extremists in 1979, a rumor ripped through the Muslim world that the desecration was an American plot, hatched by that nefarious foe of Islam, Jimmy Carter; the American Embassy in Pakistan was put to the torch by an enraged crowd, with loss of life. How does such a rumor gain irresistible momentum in the absence of one shred of evidence? Many are the Muslims who have never conversed with a foreigner, but who will swear that there exists a vast Western conspiracy to prey upon them. They believe that their misfortunes are wrought by men in distant, secret corridors; their imaginations are peopled with invisible agents manipulated by hidden hands. Here the stuff of cheap spy thrillers passes for certain truth, and faith shares minds with the vision of a world tightly run by the CIA and international Zionism.

Yet it has not been the West that has borne the brunt of Muslim wrath. A heightened Muslim sensibility has underlined the differences that divide Muslims, and has set one variety of Islam against another. Pipes relates how Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Iran have built rival Muslim networks of influence, which ruthlessly compete for the allegiance of committed Muslims everywhere. Here Pipes is at his very best, describing the calculating methods used by each contestant to undercut all rivals. Not surprisingly, he has found that these various groups will stop at nothing to advance their irreconcilable claims to religio-political authority. And the competition is fueled by money—money to smooth conversions to Islam, to build mosques, to subsidize Muslim opposition groups, to defame other pretenders. So taken is Pipes with this finding, that he concludes that the oil shock delivered by Muslim producers to Western consumers was decisive in prompting the resurgence. With overflowing coffers, Saudi Arabia and Libya could indulge in ambitious campaigns to export their versions of Muslim political activism; Iran could afford to pursue utopia and a costly holy war. Pipes posits a direct link between the vicissitudes of Islam and the price of oil.

Now vast oil wealth has raised income and aspirations to dizzying heights, and has changed the way some Muslim peoples live and think. But let it be confessed: More is known about the rings of Saturn than about the relationship of oil wealth, social distress, and Muslim activism. That these states are bidding against each other with oil money is undoubtedly true, and in this club the bids run high. But this com-

petition has been a response to a rising popular mood, not its cause. Thus there is an unwarranted boldness in the author's predictions. He declares the resurgence "fortuitous and transient," due simply to "freak circumstances" created by windfall revenues. Should the present oil glut continue, the oil states will run growing deficits and the pace of development will be slowed or halted. "The power of Saudi Arabia

and Libya will fade as their disposable funds diminish and the two countries return to their former inconsequential isolation." Iran's influence also "is fated to end." The fundamentalist state "is doomed; as the Khomeinist regime falls, non- or anti-Islamic forces seem likely to take its place." Then the "Islamic alternative, once so full of promise, will lose its appeal and many Muslims will again regard their

religion as an obstacle to progress." Fate! One of the hazards of immersing oneself in this material is that one begins to think in its categories.

Allahu a'lam—God only knows. Disillusionment has set in, but events well within the realm of the possible—war, revolution, subversion, or foreign intervention—could breathe a second wind into the resurgence. The Islamic regime in Iran, *pace* Pipes, has been

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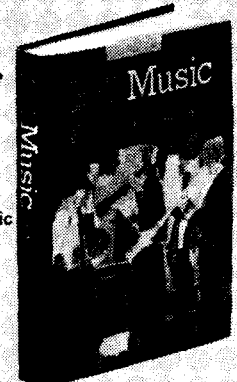
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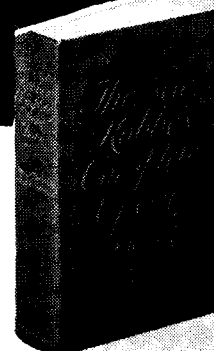
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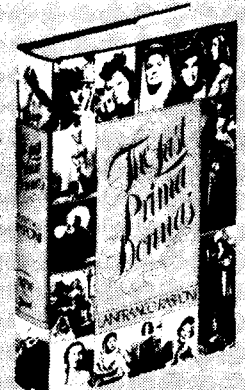
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strengthened, not weakened, by the
tribulations of war. The revolution has
crushed or dispersed its opponents
from within, and has repulsed the Iraqi
invader from without. A Persian Gulf
crisis—it takes no imagination to im-

agine one—could send Islam's stock
soaring once more, enticing many
Muslims down off their fences. That
is a possibility that the West simply
cannot afford to dismiss, for fate may
tarry. □

A COUNTRY SUCH AS THIS

James Webb/Doubleday/\$17.95

John R. Dunlap

"Why is everyone lying around like cowed
puppies, peeing on their own tummies?"
—Big Red Lesczynski

In modern fiction, popular acclaim
and critical acclaim jibe infrequently,
so it's exciting when a new author
comes along who attracts both. James
Webb is such an author—a popular
novelist whom critics can't ignore,
despite his penchant for coherent plots,
genuine heroes, and the celebration of
virtues which, in the root sense of the
word *virtue*, are manly as well as ad-
mirable. His first novel, *Fields of Fire*
(1978), tells it as it was in Vietnam,
seen through "minds unfogged by
academic posturings": i.e., Marine
Corps grunts, most of whom learn to
be dependable even as they prefer to
be anywhere else. His second novel, *A
Sense of Honor* (1981), chronicles six
hectic days in the lives of Annapolis
midshipmen and junior officers, dur-
ing which a wavering plebe must work
out an answer to a blunt question pro-
ffered by an energetic first classman:
"Are you bigger than your goddamn
self?" Ignoring a modern preference
for literary sludge, both novels
nonetheless drew kudos from critics.
Webb is popular, all right—but how
could the critics fault his shrewd
perception and his near flawless
craftsmanship?

One might cavil at portions of
Webb's third novel, *A Country Such
As This*. The cultural detail, though
lush and resonant, clunks now and
then with some off-key dialogue: e.g.,
the accent of a Japanese whose English
is inconsistently broken (advancing
within six pages from the preposterous
"You are surprise I speak your
ranguage" to the perfect "General
MacArthur came to Yokohama after
he landed at Atsugi" back to the

labored "You go Korea soon?"), or
the anachronism that butts into the
raw diction of a Korean War ser-
viceman (in the early 1950s, American
males didn't yet speak with ironic
passivity of "getting laid"). But the
few linguistic blemishes quickly fade
amid the exuberance of Webb's nar-
rative and the ambitious sweep of his
plot.

A Country Such As This tells of one
generation in the life of a country
James Webb loves; a story of
America's great leap, well, sideways:
from reluctant world power assuming
terrible responsibilities in 1951 to
worldweary democracy about to ar-
tulate its *Weltschmerz* with the elec-
tion of Jimmy Carter in 1976; a
sprawling, boisterous, tender, violent,
sad, funny, agonizing tale of the good
and the bad, the lovely and the ugly,
the great and the small in a nation of
grand ideals and grandiose uncertain-
ties. That's quite a haul, even for 534
pages, and even for James Webb,
who—true to form after *Fields of Fire*
and *A Sense of Honor*—misses little
detail yet wastes few words.

Webb secures a tight pace by chan-
neling the sprawl of his narrative
through the tributaries of three prin-
cipal characters, classmates at the
Naval Academy. On Graduation Day
in 1951, Judd Smith, Red Lesczynski,
and Joe Dingenfelder—inseparable as
midshipmen—look forward now to
separate choices of assignment. Judd-
sonia Smith, a Virginia hillbilly of
Celtic-Indian stock, is the wild one,
eagerly anticipating his commission in
the Marine Corps and a combat tour
in Korea; Stanislaus (Red) Lesczynski,
Polish-American and Catholic, is the
proper one, due shortly to marry his
Sophia before entering Naval flight
school; and Joseph Dingenfelder,
Jewish and vaguely intellectual, is the
sensitive one, ready for a Navy-
sponsored stint at MIT. At their last
meeting at Mario's Bar in downtown

John R. Dunlap teaches English at the
University of Santa Clara.

nnapolis, the three become, literal-
, "blood brothers." With the help of
steak knife and Judd's Indian
ravado, a promise is sealed: They will
meet again, in exactly 25 years, right
here at Mario's. "We'll drink the
scotch and count each other's wrinkles
and tell lies. Just the three of us. No
excuses, unless you're dead."

But we already know from the short
prologue, set in 1976, that only one of
them will be at the Old Town Tavern
(formerly Mario's Bar) 25 years after
the promise, sipping the Scotch alone,
scarred by those 25 years, and quietly
missing his two friends. We don't yet
know who returns—Webb drops
enough hints in the prologue to sug-
gest, in retrospect, any one of the
three—but we aren't too far into the
rest of the novel before Webb makes
it matter, deeply, that not all these
three young men are going to reach age
47.

In *Country*, Webb repeats the
technical formula of his two previous
novels: a prologue neatly anticipating
the novel's mood, *mise-en-scène*, and
consequent action; a studied omnis-
cient viewpoint allowing him to set the
private doubts of his characters in sup-
ple counterpoint to their actions; a
military backdrop affording his
brushstrokes a canvas whose texture he
knows intimately. Working within that
formula is Webb's agile prose, alter-
nately laconic and expansive, matching
dry comment to lucid image. For a
sample, try this description of a minor
character in *Country*:

He was not a big man but he had a sort of
power in him; not the affirmative direct-
ness of the achiever who must win, but the
simple tenacity of a man who has never
won and thus does not really even think
about winning, but rather sees life as a daily
refusal to be beaten. His body carried the
stringy, acquiescent toughness of the
mountains. With his gnarled look and his
mousy, gray-tinged hair, he could have
been anywhere from thirty to sixty years
old. He had clear blue eyes and a certain
set in his square, creased face, a posture to
it, the thin mouth wide and firm,
unyielding, the hollows of his cheeks and
the slight tilt of his head a promise that he
meant exactly what he said, and the world
be damned all to hell.

That's the Webb touch, whether he's
nailing your attention to a combat
scene, or just evoking your wonder at
the quiet heroism of normal human
endurance.

Webb himself is a certified
American hero, graduate of Annapolis
(class of 1968, a year which he says in
Country "went through America like
a chainsaw out of control"), Marine
Corps company commander in Viet-
nam, twice wounded: Navy Cross,
Silver Star Medal, two Bronze Stars,

two Purple Hearts, National Achieve-
ment Medal—the works. He is also a
writer disinclined to parade his own
valor up and down the main street of
his readers' imaginations, a man taken
up with the lives of others—of the
young troops he led in Vietnam, of the
veterans he has championed as a
lawyer and congressional aide, of his
family and friends, and of the
characters in his novels.

A man of great ingenuity as well as
splendid character, Webb displays in
his fiction a keen sense of human
motivation. He is almost ruthless in his
depiction of human foibles, yet never
gives in to an easy cynicism, for he
knows what humans are made of. A
true artist, Webb "lets go" his
characters, content to watch in fascina-
tion as they work out their destinies
under the burden of their weaknesses

and the fickleness of events.

Thus, in *Country*, Judd Smith
stumbles from Marine Corps hero to
FBI agent to podunk preacher,
wounded more by a troubled marriage
than by Chinese bullets in Korea or by
a gun blast from a fugitive criminal;
Joe Dingenfelder gives up his own hap-
piness in a hopeless attempt to bring
happiness to his wife Dorothy, herself
caught up in the shrill demands of her

Wanted, dead or alive.



Chuck Bebus is wanted. Dead or alive. By his family and his friends.

Chuck is just one of nearly 2,500 Americans still missing in Vietnam. 2,500
people who disappeared, leaving questions in their place.

Over the years since we left the conflict, hundreds of firsthand sightings by
refugees and others report Americans still alive in Vietnam. Laos. And Cambodia.
Growing older day to day in prison camps, while Hanoi denies knowledge of them.
Other reports confirm bodies being held for ransom by that same Hanoi government.

Meantime, their wives and families live frozen in time. Not knowing whether
to remarry. To move ahead. Or to hang onto hope.

Now, Washington has finally admitted some of the missing could still be alive.
But the wheels of government turn slowly. You can help speed them up. Write
your senator or congressman.

Or write the Vietnamese **Americans are still in Vietnam.**
Ambassador to the United Nations, 20 Waterside **Let's get them out.**
Plaza, N.Y., N.Y. 10010. Let Hanoi know that this time Americans are together on the
question of Vietnam. And that we want out. Completely.

The National League of Families, 1608 K St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006

temperament and the flaky insistence of her New Age politics; Red and Sophia Lesczynski both have, above all, each other, their children, and a close-knit Polish-American community in Pennsylvania, a place to come to amid the frequent displacements of Red's military career, but a hometown threatened by labor troubles and bewildering social change. From his depiction of authentic characters buffeted by real events, Webb achieves a moving commentary on the character of a whole nation.

We are left to suppose that Americans make up a nation worthy of love, intense loyalty, and genuine pride—in a word, patriotism—yet a

nation in whose character quite a bit has gone awry. And this has been Webb's consistent theme. In *A Sense of Honor*, for example, a midshipman AWOL for a compelling personal reason is involved in a fender-bender in Washington, D.C. while racing back to Annapolis during the wee hours of the morning to beat reveille. A lone sentence dropped in Webb's offhand description of that minor incident sums up what James Webb stands against and what his novelist's eye can see that too much of America, a country such as this, has let itself become: "The driver of the other car was walking around holding his neck, feigning whiplash." □

THE DEATH OF CHE GUEVARA

Jay Cantor/Alfred A. Knopf/\$17.95

FAMILY PORTRAIT WITH FIDEL

Carlos Franqui/Random House/\$17.95

Cynthia Grenier

Any man who writes a 578-page post-modernist novel with the eponymous hero one of the icons of our age certainly desires to be taken seriously. Jay Cantor, who was 17 when a Bolivian Army Sergeant killed Ernesto Che Guevara with a burst from an M-2 carbine, ambitiously pulls out every literary stop he can. There are flashbacks within flashbacks, reworking of entries from Guevara's own writings with "real" quotations cunningly threaded in, segments of shooting scripts and movie treatments, playlets featuring characters named Scum Mouth, Big Ass, Shit Head, Dog's Breath plus quick takes of a half century of recent political history. All this is compressed into those years in Guevara's life already extensively documented by Guevara himself, by biographer Daniel James, and Guevara's first wife Hildea Gadea.

And what a curious Guevara we have. The original was, one would have thought, ideal raw material for a novelist. Adventurer, doctor, apocalyptic visionary, would-be poet, a mystic who had no God (*dixit* Regis Debray), viscerally hostile to the United States, intensely political, personally engaging, witty, attractive—the intellectual who died as a man of

action. In short, the perfect paradigm for the decade of which he literally became the symbol.

Cantor, however, sees Guevara quite differently. His Guevara through all of these 578 pages is a whiny, father-dominated, asthmatic, mean-spirited, humorless wimp whose god is Mahatma Gandhi, of all people. Karl Marx, Vladimir I. Lenin, and Fidel Castro are, well, almost incidental. It's Daddy and Gandhi all the way, which gives rise to such passages of querulous Gandhi-ridden soul-searching as:

We might stop, Father, be nonviolent warriors. But they would then kill us all indifferently. They would never limit their greed until we destroyed them utterly, crushed their heads. I slammed my foot down on the pavement, smashing one under foot and not blood but milky-white juice ran from it, like sperm. My chest shook. A harsh wind took me over and made my body tremble. No, you said, *you must not tremble. Remember The Hindu Science of Breath Control!*¹

It is interesting to contrast this "pathetic little mother-----," as Cantor all too accurately characterizes his protagonist at one point, with the real Guevara as perceived in Carlos Fran-

¹This passage regrettably is entirely typical of the prose in which the whole novel is written—vibrating with high-strung emotion and utterly devoid of humor except for that which is clearly involuntary.

qui's two books, *Diary of the Cuban Revolution* (1977) and above all in the recent *Family Portrait with Fidel*. Franqui, archivist of the Cuban Revolution, comrade-in-arms of Castro and Guevara in the revolution's heyday, went off in 1968 into permanent exile in Italy, having decided that Fidel had betrayed Cuba, the Revolution, and Franqui. His new book is a series of brief, vivid, informal, impressionistic views, a series of "takes" of Fidel in action during his first eight years in power, supplemented by glimpses of some of the other players, like Raul Castro, whom he loathes, and Guevara whom he esteems.²

One of Guevara's cameo appearances in Franqui's book gives more material, raises more questions, intrigues far more than all the many pages of Mr. Cantor's creative writing:

Anyway you look at it, Che made himself into a guerrilla leader through force of will, talent, and sheer audacity. He made sick men with broken weapons into the second guerrilla force in the Sierra. He carried out the first raids into the lowlands. . . . Within the free zone he set up factories, bakeries, hospitals, arms-repair shops, and Radio Rebelde—all with supplies sent by the urban underground. He raised the level of the war. . . .

Fidel, ever the pragmatist, later used Che's innovations. Che had always declared himself to be a Communist, but his brand of communism never convinced Fidel, who recognized Che's independence of character and his sense of morality. Che and I had many arguments during that period. He would defend the Soviet Union and the Cuban Communist Party, while I attacked them. For him, they were synonymous with socialism. . . . Fidel would say that soon enough I would see Che arguing with and fighting against the Communists in the same way he disagreed with me. (And that was a fact, but Che's enlightenment is another story.) Fidel's problems with Che had nothing to do with communism; rather, they were related to Che's independence of spirit. He was ungovernable.

Cantor primarily appears concerned with all that is failure in Guevara's life. The asthmatic childhood, the traveling about Latin America (a lark according to Guevara's letters to friends and family, but treated by Cantor as veritable Stations of the Cross—a long ordeal of asthma attacks, dirt, stench, vomit, bile, and misery), the Granma expedition, and the early days of the Cuban adventure culminating in the

²Franqui's *Family Portrait with Fidel* is well worth reading for the one scene alone in which he describes Castro at the outset of the Cuban Missile Crisis punching a control button in the Soviet electronic station in Cuba to shoot down an American U-2 plane with a ground-to-air missile. "Robert Anderson, the American pilot, would be the only fatality in that war. The Russians were flabbergasted, but Fidel simply said, 'Well, now we'll see if there's a war or not.'"

near disaster at Algeria di Pio, and, of course, the final Bolivian campaign. All that is success, power, glory is rigorously scrubbed from the novel, which means effacing a lot of interesting not to say essential political history. What was it like being a Minister of Industry, then Minister of Finance at 32, when one knew nothing about industry, finance, or government? How did Guevara and his fellow-committed Communist friend Raul Castro jockey for power against the Cuban Communist party with whom they had virtually warred during the whole time in the Sierra Maestra (Franqui's *Diary of the Cuban Revolution* richly documents the struggle)? What of his economic policies, his concept of non-material incentives, his losing jousts with economist Charles Bettelheim, his theorizing about the creation of the New Man, his travels abroad, his meetings with Chou en Lai, Khrushchev, Ben Bella, his relations—all important—with Fidel?

By cutting directly from failure pre-Havana to the impending failure in Bolivia, Cantor deprives the reader of any perspective on the Bolivian venture or on the man himself. The Bolivian adventure itself takes up more than half the book, and is an extremely free reworking of the actual *Bolivian Diaries* described by their American editor Daniel James (certainly far from a pro-Guevarist) as "crisp, restrained, highly literate with a dry sense of humor." None of which qualities, alas, applies to Cantor's "diaries." Cantor lengthens the entries with many stage directions: Guerrillas are constantly screaming, crying, yelping when they're not whimpering or wailing.

Cantor's Indians are pseudo-mythic presences, owing more to Carlos Casteñada than to any direct observation of the Indians of the *altiplano*. As for any sense of what Cuba, Guatemala, Bolivia, or Argentina are like, the reader will look in vain. They are all presented as interchangeable alien lands with no indication that the author is aware of their highly different cultures, histories, and economies. A view which gives rise to such passages as:

The truth is in the villages. The villagers, once they have conquered their bodies, can live in voluntary simplicity. Latin American country people don't need manufactured goods. They don't need North American barbarism, North American industry. Latin America can regain the socialism of the Incas. Each Andean village was an organ whose veins were the Inca roads. The villages formed a single human body, incarnated and imaged in the Inca. The Latin American Revolution does not require violence, only noncooperation with the Imperialists, with their panderings to our lusts. With noncooperation the imperialists will evaporate like specters.

Cynthia Grenier, a movie producer, maintains an ongoing interest in matters Latin American.

“Nothing. An accident.” We paused for a moment. The pain was good for me, it distracted my mind from my anger. I cooled off, but my anger had left me exhausted. Monje was scratching himself through his beard, over and over. My words were annoying flies. Or maybe he

next time around Gandhi-loving asthmatics should be left out of the equation? Or is he merely indulging in an overly long literary exercise, blending today's fashionable political postures with yesterday's fashionable hero suitably "demystified"? I tend to the latter view. Guevara's life and times, not to mention that telluric totalitarian Fidel Castro, are stuff for more than one novel, post-modernist or other. □

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CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 7)

vigorous but serious critique of people to whom I pay due respect, only to be misrepresented as offering a debunking exposé. The editors have shown a failure to distinguish between literary disagreement and crude denunciation.

—Peter Shaw
New York, New York

Hegemony on the High Frontier

Karl O'Lessker needn't be ashamed. The infinite maze of nuclear doctrine has claimed many before him who dared to enter it and never emerged—or else hobbled back with their logical faculties fractured ("High Frontiers of Strategic Defense," *TAS*, April 1984).

He analyzes and endorses the Administration's plans to replace Mutual Assured Destruction with a technically effective Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD). The Soviets won't like it, since the BMD would render us invulnerable to nuclear attack. So he then says, as he logically must, that this prospect will gravely tempt the Soviets to do "whatever they could to prevent it . . . includ[ing] a preemptive nuclear strike." In other words, the BMD project is itself a severe goad to mutual ruin.

Therefore, he vigorously approves an idea that seemed almost a casual afterthought when President Reagan first presented it: We must, O'Lessker argues, share our superior BMD technology with the Soviets so both sides would acquire the defensive systems simultaneously.

But this startling and logically correct proposal unravels into a hopeless tangle the instant you examine it closely. The BMD—especially its space-based components—would necessarily incorporate many of our most advanced high-tech achievements. Is O'Lessker suggesting that we hand the Russians the blueprints and manufacturing techniques that constitute our technical advantage over their manpower advantage and then trust them to use this bonanza solely for their own BMD program? Or at the opposite extreme, is he suggesting we simply deliver to them a completed BMD, batteries included, with instructions for turning it on; and then expect they will trust us enough to believe that if they ever need to push the "Go" button, the whole thing will actually work, rather than going "Kapoo!" in their faces like a trick cigar? Or is he suggesting some intermediate approach, say a merger of the U.S. and Soviet R & D establishments? How else could both sides get the finished product simultaneously? O'Lessker estimates that creation of a reliable BMD would consume 15 years and \$100 billion.

Anyone able to believe the two nuclear megapowers can trust each other enough to conduct in concert a huge Star Wars military hardware project, which will hatch functioning twin BMD systems at the same moment many years hence, cannot logically argue that any BMD system is necessary at all. If the two powers can plausibly embark on such a program, then they must already trust each other enough to move directly into phased, verifiable disarmament steps, a much cheaper and saner fruit of mutual trust than the immensely expensive and complex joint BMDs would be.

But if the two powers do not share enough trust to do this, then an American decision to proceed apace with our technically superior BMD development will severely rattle the Soviets, no matter how often we declare an intention to make them our full BMD partners, eventually. They won't believe it, and they will respond accordingly.

Some blind Tarzans plainly enjoy yanking the bear's tail. O'Lessker seems not to be one of these. Yet he urges immediately starting a BMD program that he acknowledges as likely to provoke a preemptive nuclear attack by the Soviets. And to forestall this, he proposes a BMD partnership with them, which assumes a magnitude of mutual trust that clearly doesn't exist.

This muddle suggests two contradictory conclusions:

1. Advocates of BMD and other High Frontier armaments don't really anticipate cooperation with the Soviets. But they hope that *proposing* cooperation on BMD will befuddle the domestic opposition enough for High Frontier to proceed toward the day when we can safely and credibly present the Soviets with an ultimatum: Capitulate or die. And what do the BMDers think will befuddle the Soviets enough to refrain from a preemptive attack insuring that this day never arrives? Maybe these advocates can cross their fingers and pray that our existing deterrent forces will hold the Soviets precariously at bay until the ultimatum is ready for delivery.

2. Advocates of BMD realize that current levels of suspicion and antagonism between the powers prevent cooperative BMD development, but they hope the mere proposal will signal a desire to revive détente. If détente returns, then various joint efforts could follow—including BMD, since it would shield both powers from third party missiles, particularly from Chinese ones, which are a special Soviet anxiety as O'Lessker notes. But a renewed détente, thorough and durable enough to sustain the mutual trust necessary for Soviet-American partnership on BMD and related projects, would actually constitute

a dual hegemony over the earth.

If this is what the BMD advocates really seek, they should say so, since greater clarity would help them discern and prepare for the consequences of what they seek. For instance: The Chinese, Europeans, and Third World would not like the prospect of U.S.-Soviet global hegemony and would try to sabotage it.

Or, if the advocates really seek to get the BMD jump on the Soviets so we can eventually present the final ultimatum, they should say this clearly, because they must mobilize intrepid public support—beginning immediately. The intervening years will be extremely tense and scary, as the Soviets threaten nuclear attack before we can complete our BMD and as we brandish our megatonnage, trying to frighten them into quavering indecision. Without public support, the U.S. would blink first.

But in neither case should the BMD advocates beguile themselves (and the rest of us) with the dangerous delusion that if the U.S. unilaterally launches a BMD program, while swearing a desire to share it with the disbelieving Soviets, the result will be nuclear security for all under a joint BMD. The BMDers seek either the ultimate American dominion over the Russians or a dual hegemony with them. Stating this frankly and deriving consistent policy from it would at least help to avoid careening into nuclear war through misunderstanding and miscalculation—by antagonists and allies alike.

Otherwise, any survivors in the southern hemisphere, Asia, and European fringes will emerge from their fallout pits and bid good riddance to the arch blunderers from the continental craters that were the Soviet Union and the United States.

—David Underhill
Mobile, Alabama

Karl O'Lessker replies:

Mr. Underhill raises two major points against the proposal to build a BMD and share its technology with the Soviet Union. The first is properly a matter of serious concern: that the Soviets might profit from being granted access to the highest of our high technology. The second—that our doing so would be seen by the rest of the world as establishing a U.S.-Soviet dual hegemony over the earth—seems to me almost totally devoid of merit.

As to the first, I am well aware, as are President Reagan, former President Nixon, General Dan Graham, and others, that technology-sharing carries with it the risk that the Soviets would gain knowledge they could then use in other weapons systems. But to view this prospect as balefully as Mr. Underhill does strikes me as betraying

a certain naiveté about Soviet technological prowess. While we are certainly ahead of them in many respects, they are surely ahead of us in others—beam weaponry, for example. And, more important, technological advantage as between the two superpowers is as fleeting as young love and altogether too evanescent, in my judgment, to be a determinant of long-term global strategy.

The related question as to whether there could ever be a sufficient degree of trust between us to permit joint development of a BMD is crucial here. Mr. Underhill thinks not. But perhaps his "logic" (a word he badly overuses) is defective, because it ignores the implacable nature of the choice with which both sides will be confronted before long. As I tried to show in my article, there will be no option for either of us other than cooperation or annihilation once we begin to make demonstrable progress on a BMD. In so harsh a strategic environment as that, the difficulties in working out an acceptable mode of cooperation must seem a good deal less formidable.

Nor is Mr. Underhill's logic very compelling when he says that if there were enough mutual trust to collaborate on a BMD, it would be easier and better to move instead toward disarmament. Here again the key is dire necessity. With their present strategic nuclear superiority, the Soviets have little or no incentive to negotiate any sort of arms-control agreement that would reduce their advantage over us. But confronted with the choice of either cooperating on a BMD project or launching a probably suicidal preemptive nuclear strike, they are likely to rediscover the "logic" of cooperation.

Mr. Underhill's second point, that the rest of the world would regard so robust an expression of Soviet-American détente as constituting a *de facto* dual hegemony over the earth, may be correct but is also not very compelling. For one thing, it would be a peculiar kind of hegemony, consisting solely of an agreement not to wage an all-out nuclear war against each other, while doing nothing to reduce the possibility of many other sorts of conflicts, from guerrilla insurgencies in Central America to World War III in Europe.

Mr. Underhill sees unspecified but no doubt dark "consequences" flowing from the rest of the world's dislike for this putative dual hegemony. I wonder what they could be. A bad sulk, perhaps? I don't mean to be smart-alecky about this but I find it hard to conceive of any important sanctions the Europeans and Chinese could impose upon the superpowers for the crime of ridding the world of the threat of nuclear war. □

WARMING UP FOR RAMADAN

by Victor Anant

KARACHI, Pakistan—Apart from Islam and its regional sword-bearer, President General Zia ul-Haq, the news is always about a few areas of social skirmishes: seizure of heroin and other drugs, of VCRs and other prized consumer durables; rape, abduction, and other such exploits in rural areas; and that perennial crop of stories rebutting stories rebutting stories emanating from India about such friendly-neighbor activities as subversion, massing troops across the border, and arms purchases. It's business as before, and the alliance of forces that control Pakistan remains the mullah, the merchant, and the militia. It's only the area of underground activity that has both expanded and become modernized: for example, the fact that heroin has taken the place of the traditional export, hashish; and the grim possibility that the gathering warclouds might turn into nuclear mushrooms.

Victor Anant has written for the London Spectator and other publications.



The censors have shown greater leniency recently to columnists who write deadly serious "funnies" and poetry, and cartoons and news reports that show Uncle Sam at his worst. Even in the flourishing underground trade of VCR cassettes, American porn has the edge over Indian films, and "Dallas" commands more private viewing than, say, smuggled denunciations of the military regime by political groups in exile in Britain. Indeed, Britain remains the epicenter of Pakistani politics-in-exile: Banned novelist Salman Rushdie's family lives here; Aziz Kurtha, who interviewed Miss Benazir Bhutto, daughter of former ruler Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, on a British commercial TV program for the Asian minority in England, is a local boy made good. And one of the domestic drivers I talk to, Mefooz, from "Azad" (or Pakistan-held) Kashmir, tells me that from his hometown, Mirpur, everyone has set up some kind of shop or other in England. "They took even the local barber with them," he says. "And if you go to Mirpur today," he adds, "you will see big British cars, Chevrolet and Buick and Mercedes, standing outside two and three-story British bungalows."

The spectrum of what Foreign Minister of India, Krishna Menon, once described to me as "parallel government," the burgeoning area of underground activities, is the real-life domain of poor and rich alike. While a local industrialist has been able to persuade Agrico, one of the largest American agriculture corporations, to set up a fertilizer factory here which will provide three-fourths of Pakistani requirements, importers of fertilizers are spiking their guns. While Pakistan is dry, the bottles in which fridge-cooled water is brought to the dining table is always one with a Scotch whiskey cap; as for more dangerous forms of naive lawbreaking, the newspapers report towns like Shahiwal where "smacks," or what is locally known as White King, can be bought freely. I have been promised an eyewitness trip to the Valley of Swat, and the poppy-fields in the hills, and

introductions to the growing band of foreign "settlers": and, while the Burma-Laos-Thailand Golden Triangle for drugs takes a diplomatic break, London street-prices of heroin are further strengthening Anglo-Pakistani friendships.

There is nothing which can be done openly which isn't more safely done underground. One Pakistani importer of heavy machinery under aid-programs categorized as "agricultural," told me that *they* tell the Japanese manufacturers what the price will be. "We dictate our prices to them, after we have got the contract." A houseboy of mine who now works in "Woods and Caves," a local English-eatery, says he is being pressured by other waiters to join the forged-dollar gang. Every kind of Green Card marriage and visa to work abroad can be arranged more efficiently and quickly outside officialdom. "Parallel Government" works. For the last 37 years, it is the freebooters with their will to govern (not rule) whom I have seen keeping this unruly subcontinent going. And yet, not until the night of the party, with its promise of a 25-minute edited cassette of Aziz Kurtha's television interviews with opposition Pakistanis, did I realize how urbanely confident, optimistic, things are: Pakistan is a horde of self-administering fiefdoms, each with its inviolable code of honor, dynastic, competitive, but never breaking the cohesiveness of its constituencies.

It is becoming more irrelevant, as the country warms up for the fasting month of Ramadan, whether President Zia threatens elections before the Americans threaten to cut off (token, of course) aid. No one will be able to tell which candidate represents which party. While the politicians will boycott the elections and go underground, what could happen is that the President will succeed in legitimizing the underground chiefs. That's pragmatic. The only organized opposition is the People's Party, which

has just recognized Begum Bhutto and Miss Bhutto as the leaders of the party, even in absentia.

In the awesome intimacy of thousands of homes, friends, masters, and enemies are all watching VCR cassettes, pirated versions of Miss Bhutto's television performances, with the interviewer edited out for reasons of both economy and "hard-sell." Through the homely smell of raw onions and kebab, or biryani rice, she can be seen exuding a sulphurous charisma of youth, persecution, and endurance. As State-controlled TV defeats itself with "overkill," this is how the opposition will gain dramatic advantage, emerging Houdini-like around the country. When Miss Bhutto was asked by her British interviewer whether she had any last "message" for Pakistan, she rose with rhetoric, appropriately aware that she would be seen back in the VCR-decked homes. It will be a VCR election, when it comes, and Miss Bhutto is VCR-Queen. □



CURRENT WISDOM

The Nation

Esoteric rumblings from the galley slaves who sweat below deck for Victor Navasky and the New Dawn:

New York City

As workers at *The Nation*, we protest the publication of David Levine's cartoon in the February 25 issue. The problem is not that the drawing is sexually frank; it is that a progressive magazine has no business using rape jokes and sexist imagery (he screws, she is screwed) to make the point that Kissinger revels in his international dominance. Kissinger is a man, but the globe is not a woman. The artist's intention may have been to dramatize the confusion between sex and power in the mind of a powerful white, middle-aged man. But the publication of his drawing shows that *The Nation* itself is imbued with that mentality. No wonder seven out of ten of our subscribers are men.

David Acker, Claudine Bacher
David Bank, Anthony Borden
Phyllis L. Burns, Ann B. Epstein
Karen FitzGerald, John Holtz
L.A. Kauffman, Cooke V. Klein
Andrew Kopkind, Douglas Lavin
Laurie Lipper, Greta Loell
Judith Long, Ola Lyon
Maria Margaronis, George Monaco
Jane Oski, Katha Pollitt
Mark A. Rausher, Jane W. Sharples
Micah Sifry, Shirley Sulat
Art Winslow, JoAnn Wypijewski
[March 24, 1984]

I.O.A. Congress Announcement

What follows is from a printed announcement from the International Ontopsychology Association, though it does indeed sound like a dinner conversation recently heard by one of our editors trapped *a table* at a party given by an adult sociologist:

The Ontopsychological school, availing itself of new research criteria and of a new telematic epistemology, maintains that social modes do not spring from dialectics of territory or of class, or of consumer goods, or of means of power, but rather from dynamic latencies capillarized in millions of individuals in system functions which, once they have reached the event maturation, burst forth in catastrophic phenomenology engaging a suitable stereotype protagonist or duty marionette (general, president, political party, etc.) to consummate the act of social schizophrenia in mass genocide.

Naturally this must be analyzed also according to the traces of the force points of the already exposed group pressures, of ideological upheavals and of echo-astronomical concomitances. Thus the great mass of socio-philosophical culture of religious, military, political and economic currents will be reviewed. For example, the theorization of K. Marx or of S. Mill will be examined so as to verify whether they are considerations objectifying a context or the rationalized sublimation of a duty exhibitor of a collective complex.

Considering the fact that politics is the complex projection of an unconscious network capillarized and then manifested by permanent protagonists, and considering the fact that any policy functional to man is possible only if it is administered by true men, and that until these exist, the man project is impossible for any culture, it follows that the solution is strictly dependent on a pedagogical act: to bring a child to acquire reality on the historical plane in accordance with the projection of his ontic in se. Thus we shall propose an opening towards a neutral listening to what is intended as essential in the evolution of the child's self-development.

In fact it seems that, beyond all its possible adaptations, the life stimulus or the a priori cause persists as man's in se. This in se, corresponding to total positive intention between individual-environment and collectivity, remains in fact divided from the man-history on account of mechanistic fixtures which determine human alienation.

For all scholars of merit the Xth Congress will be a scientific and human opportunity to individuate the base force for a functional anthropology. It will be a concrete possibility to look beyond political categoricals and to meet the man-event starting from the authentic child.

The Congress will not propose a theory or an nth dialectical ideology, but it will open to all those scholars who are really seeking the real of social man as personal self-realization, a vision so far unforeseen. If then from what is elaborated by the Congress an alternative proposal to the current politics should emerge, this will be the merit and decision of others who have the Promethean capacity to incarnate the soul as the mundane history of the Being.
[October 1983]

Newsweek

Philological enlightenment from the Demosthenes of Campaign '84, vouchsafed during an interview with the lily-white editors of *Newsweek*:

Q: You seem to have said that "Hymie" is not a derogatory phrase. Is that true?
A. It's noninsulting colloquial language. So many times we've said, "We're going to New York, we're going to Harlem, we're going to Chocolate City. We're going to see Mose and Mosella." Which are certain characterizations of blacks. Not quite like nigger, but like so . . .

Q. Do you remember when you first used "Hymie" and in what context?

A. I think the first time I heard it was when I got to Chicago about 20 years ago. There's a place down off Maxwell Street called "Jewtown." Understand? "Jewtown is where Hymie gets you if you can't negotiate them suits down," you understand? That's not meant as anti-Semitic . . . If you can't buy any suits downtown, you go down to Jewtown on Maxwell Street, and you start negotiating with Hyman and Sons . . . And if Hyman and Sons show up they're called Hymie. There's no insult even to them. This thing took on a life of its own. Now that is where it is . . .
[April 9, 1984]

National Public Radio Morning Program

The venerable Miss June Jordan proffers reflections and poesy of the geopolitical sort during a gruesome interview on National Public Radio:

There's a hookup I made between my vulnerability as a woman, having been raped, and the conduct of the South African government. South Africa is attempting to make impossible the control of your own life for all the black peoples of southern Africa. And the men here in this country and everywhere else who would deny me the liberty to walk by myself on a beach or for that matter on a street, this seems to be part of the same process of willful annihilation of my liberty as a human being. And it's not that I sat down to write a poem about my, uh, rage and anguish at having been raped and then it occurred to me to hook it up to South Africa, that was an awareness that I was not even conscious of until I articulated the whole thing in one poem, in one blow. I mean, I wrote that poem without any drafts at all, it just came out like that:

I was wrong again to be me
being me where I was
wrong to be who I am
god-damned wrong
Which is exactly like South Africa
penetrating, as it were, into Namibia
penetrating into Angola
and does that mean, I mean,
how do you know if Pretoria
ejaculates?

What will the evidence look like?
The proof of the monster ejaculation on
black land

And if, after Namibia
and if, after Angola
and if, after Zimbabwe
and if, after all of my kinsmen and
women resist
even to self-immolation of the villages
and if after that we lose nevertheless,
what will the big boys say?
Will they claim my consent?
Do you follow me?
We are the wrong people
of the wrong skin
on the wrong continent
and what in the hell
is everybody being reasonable [for]?
[February 10, 1984]

The New York Times

Another joyous Soviet official pauses from the hum of socialist life to celebrate one of his country's many triumphs:

A senior Soviet military official, marking the official "Day of Antiaircraft Defenses," today hailed the downing of the Korean Airlines 747 jetliner last September.

The official, Marshal of Aviation Aleksandr I. Koldunov, a deputy Defense Minister, said the destruction of the plane was a feat of arms comparable to the shooting down of the American U-2 spy plane in 1960. All 269 people aboard the Korean plane were killed. . . .
Marshal Koldunov said the air-defense

forces' "high level of readiness to fulfill their military duties is witnessed by relatively recent history: the destruction of the American spy plane U-2 on May 1, 1960, of the American reconnaissance plane RB-47 that crossed into our polar skies July 1, 1960, and the termination of the provocation prepared by the U.S. special services with the use of a South Korean airplane on Sept. 1, 1983."

[April 9, 1984]

The Daily Oklahoman

Learned observations from a Maryknoll man of the cloth at large in the Yankee interior:

A Catholic priest said Monday night that President Reagan and Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini have basically the same idea of holy war.

"What's the difference between the Ayatollah Khomeini picking 14-year-old boys off the street, sending them to Iraq, telling them that war is their key to heaven?" asked the Rev. James Sinnott, a Maryknoll priest.

"Reagan sends men to be killed in El Salvador," Sinnott said, "and you know what he said when hundreds of U.S. Marines were blown up in Beirut? He said, 'Don't pray—they're in the arms of God!' We have identical notions of holy war."

[March 23, 1984]

The Nation

A Kremlinologist speculates on the patently implausible once more and with feeling:

Younger Soviet leaders will be different in one important respect. Unable to claim credit for any of the nation's historic achievements, they will have to seek their own. If American policy greets them with reason and restraint, they may well seek that generational destiny in reform at home rather than expanded power abroad.

[March 17, 1984]

The New York Times

The Holy Man Jackson recounts a recent stirring adventure in the American outback:

I simply bear the marks in my body of reaching for redemption, I had the experience last—two weeks ago in Missouri, some small white farmers who endorsed Reagan in 1980. They had sacks over their head as they endorsed me in the daytime, maybe for fear that the banks might close on them or for fear that the agriculture department might punish them.

These men and women had some very ugly beliefs in the past. I reached out for them. I make no apology about it. I'm glad about it.

And I shall keep bearing whatever scars I must bear to make room for people. I just believe in that. It's a sacrament of my religion.

[May 4, 1984]

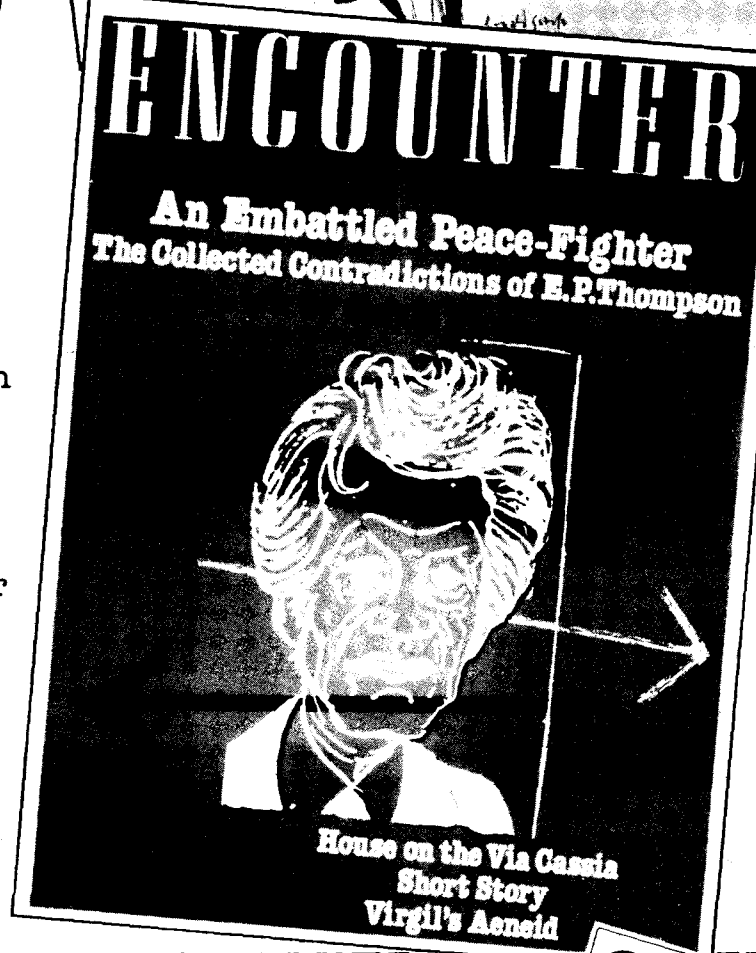
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As if to demonstrate its continuing vitality, **ENCOUNTER** celebrated its 30th anniversary with a radical redesign. Larger format ... colourful eye-catching covers ... better paper and clearer type.

The contents, however, have not changed. Jeane Kirkpatrick's challenging interview with George Urban on American Foreign Policy, Francis Watson on the Gandhi film, Zbigniew Brzezinski on the Tragic Dilemmas of Soviet World Power, Sidney Hook's Memoir of Bertrand Russell, Richard Lowenthal on Karl Marx, short stories by William Trevor, Clive Sinclair, A.S. Byatt and Penelope Lively, authoritative reviews of political, history, film and theatre books ... all these recent contributions are in **ENCOUNTER**'s established tradition of first-class journalism, its unique blend of current affairs, literature and the arts.

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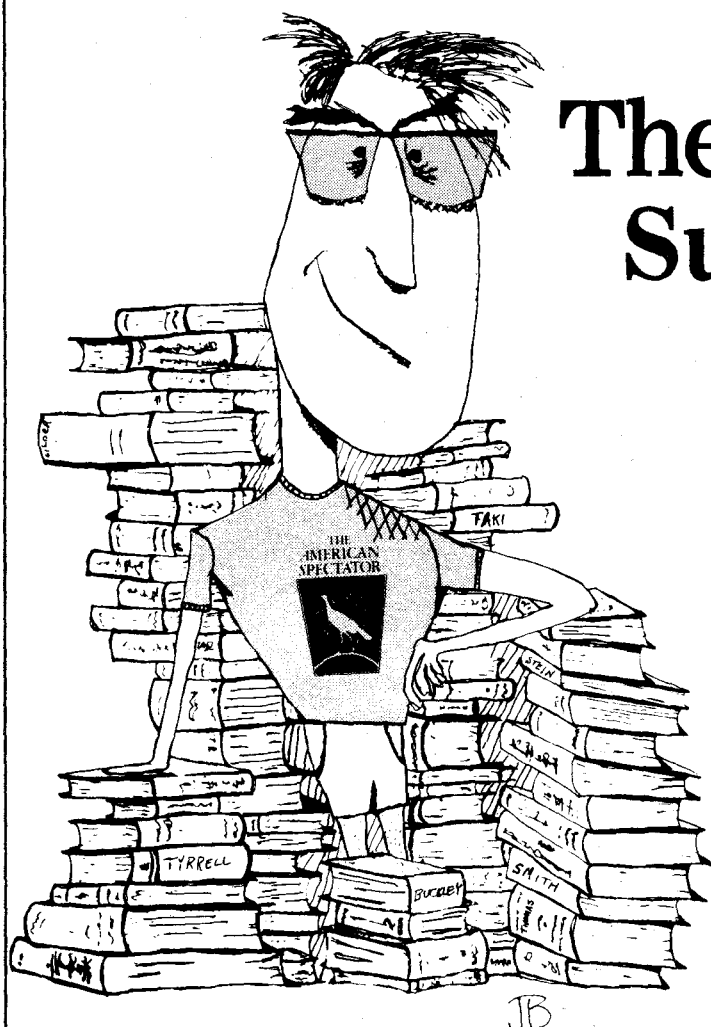
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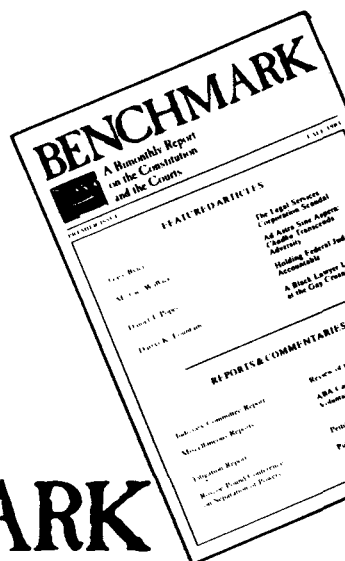
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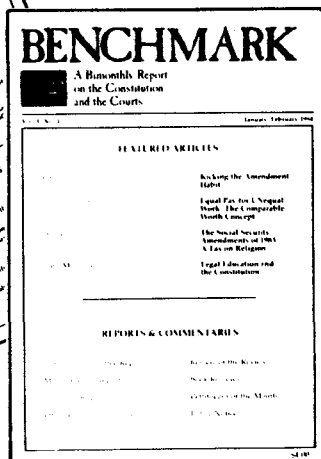


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